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MARGARET BRENDLINGER

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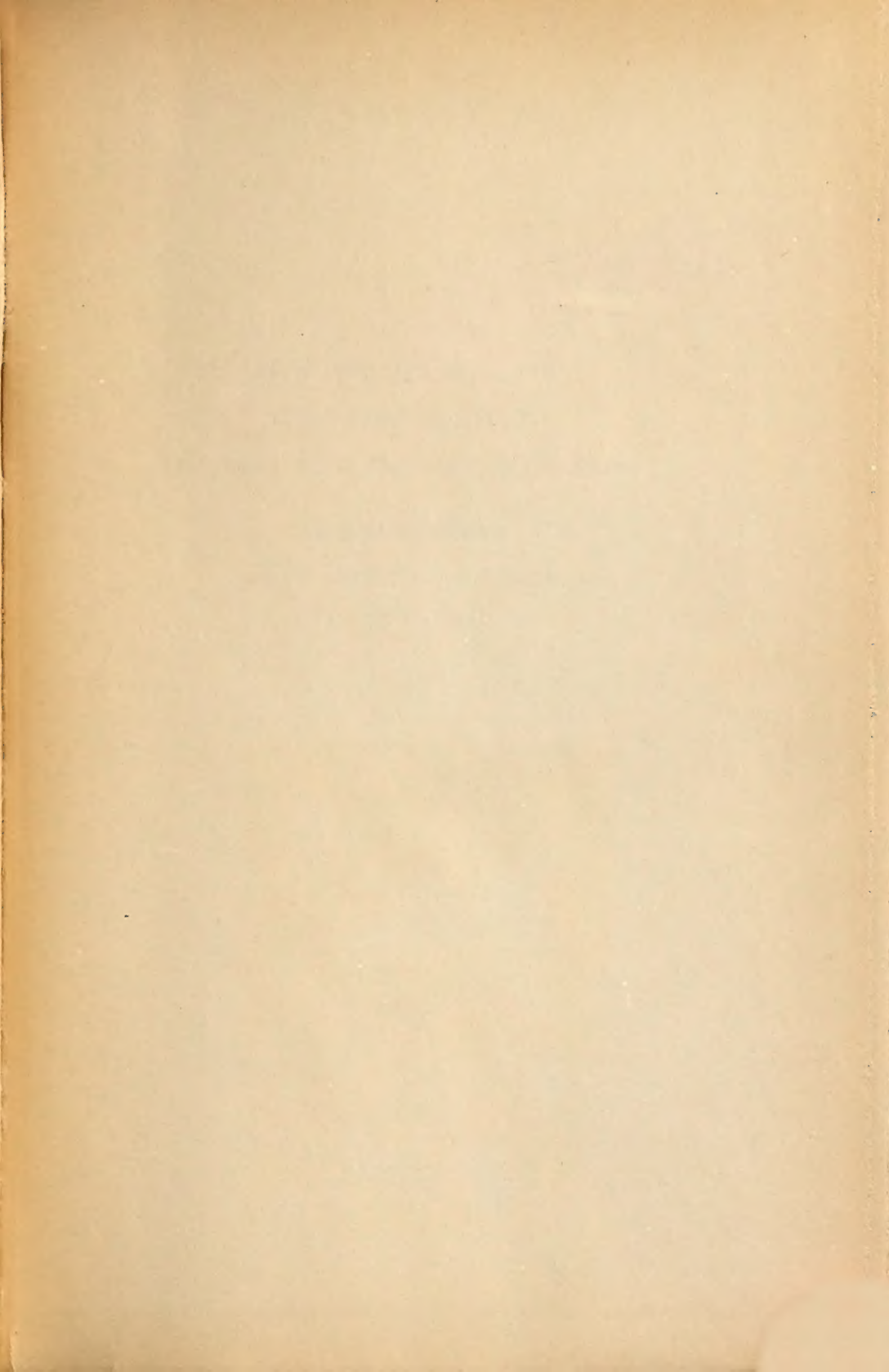
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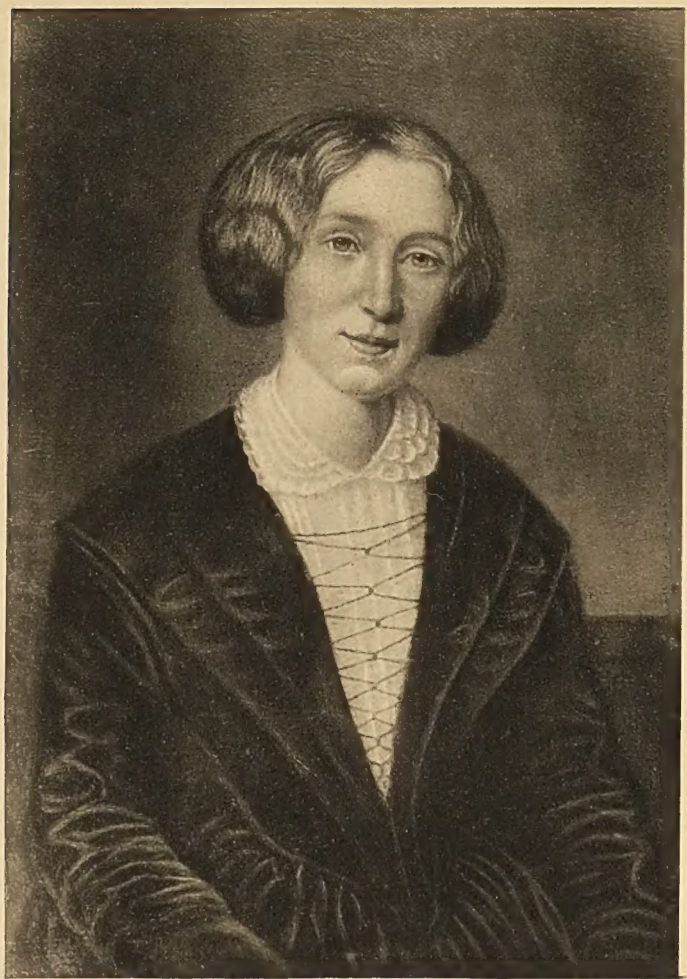
THE WRITINGS OF
GEORGE ELIOT

TOGETHER WITH THE LIFE BY J. W. CROSS

Large Paper Edition

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES

VOLUME XXII



Emory Watson Photo

George Eliot at 30

By Dr. Albert Durade

George F. Johnson
No. 12, First Avenue

THE WRITINGS OF
GEORGE ELIOT
ESSAYS
AND
UNCOLLECTED PAPERS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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INTRODUCTION

BESIDES the essays and reviews which she herself collected for publication, George Eliot wrote many other papers of a similar character, some of which are too valuable in themselves and too interesting in the light they throw on their author's thought and opinions to be allowed to drop out of sight. Of the thirteen included in the present volume, seven are now reprinted for the first time. These are "Memoirs of the Court of Austria," "Dryden and his Times," "Mackay's Progress of the Intellect," "The Morality of Wilhelm Meister," "Thomas Carlyle," "Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft," and "The Shaving of Shagpat." One essay, entitled "The Lady Novelists," which has been printed as George Eliot's, was in reality written by Lewes, as appears from a letter of Miss Evans's to Miss Hennell. The mistake arose partly perhaps from confusion with "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," which is George Eliot's own. Another article which has been published as hers is of too doubtful authenticity to warrant including it in this collection. This is the review of Vehse's "Court of Saxony," printed under the title of "Weimar and its Celebrities" in the *Westminster Review* for April, 1859. Miss Blind says that it "does not possess a single attribute that we are in the habit of associating with the writings of George Eliot," and considers it "simply incredible" that she should have

INTRODUCTION

written it. Neither Stephen nor Browning makes any mention of this paper, nor is there any reference to it in Cross's book. There appears to be no valid reason for attributing it to her, and the internal evidence is all against it.

The review of Victor Cousin's "Madame de Sablé," entitled "Woman in France," was written at Weimar in August and September, 1854, and appeared in the October number of the *Westminster Review*. At Berlin, six months later, was written the article on Vehse's "Court of Austria," which was printed in the *Westminster* for April, 1855. The biographical sketch of the German traveller George Forster made its appearance in the *Westminster Review* for October, 1856, which also contained the article entitled "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," written at Richmond in August and September of that year. "Dryden and his Times" was originally published in the *Westminster* for April, 1855, as a review of Robert Bell's edition of the poet. The review of Robert William Mackay's "The Progress of the Intellect, as exemplified in the Religious Development of the Greeks and Hebrews," was, as Sir Leslie Stephen points out, Miss Evans's first piece of original writing. It was written at Rosehill, the home of the Brays in Coventry, in 1850, and was contributed to the January number of the *Westminster Review* for 1851.

"The Morality of Wilhelm Meister," which appeared in the *Leader* for July 21, 1855, is attributed to George Eliot on good circumstantial evidence. We know that she was at that time writing for the *Leader*, which Lewes was editing, and that she had just been reading Goethe's

INTRODUCTION

novel. There is internal evidence, too, which is practically conclusive as to its authorship. The article entitled "Thomas Carlyle" was finished October 12, 1855, and published in the *Leader* for October 27. The review of Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* is of earlier date, appearing in the *Westminster* for January, 1852. Miss Evans had read the book the preceding autumn "with great pleasure," as she writes the Brays, "not for its presentation of Sterling, but of Carlyle. There are racy bits of description in his best manner, and exquisite touches of feeling." The first of the Margaret Fuller papers is attributed to Marian Evans on internal evidence which seemed to Miss Blind quite conclusive. It was printed in the *Westminster Review* for April, 1852. The article comparing Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft was finished October 9, 1855, and printed in the *Leader* for October 13. The review of George Meredith's first fiction, "The Shaving of Shagpat," Miss Evans wrote on December 31, 1855, the day after reading the book, and it appeared in the *Leader* for January 5, 1856. The paper entitled "The Grammar of Ornament" is a review of Owen Jones's book of that name. It appeared May 15, 1865, in the first number of the *Fortnightly Review*, which had just been founded, with Lewes as editor. Mr. Jones was a friend of the Leweses, and had planned the decoration of the drawing-room at the Priory.



CONTENTS

WOMAN IN FRANCE: MADAME DE SABLÉ	3
MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA	47
GEORGE FORSTER	103
SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS	186
DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES	221
MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT	275

SHORTER PAPERS

THE MORALITY OF WILHELM MEISTER	305
THOMAS CARLYLE	310
CARLYLE'S LIFE OF STERLING	314
MARGARET FULLER	321
MARGARET FULLER AND MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT . . .	325
THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT	335
THE GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT	341



NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

GEORGE ELIOT AT THE AGE OF 30 . *Frontispiece*

From a painting by D'Albert Durade in the National Portrait Gallery, London. The following account of this portrait is from the *Century Magazine* for November, 1881:—

"Miss Evans passed the Winter of 1849-50 at Geneva, in the house of M. F. d'Albert Durade, the well-known Swiss water-color painter, who is also the translator of the authorized French version of her works. At that time she had, however, written nothing original, and had attracted no general interest. While she stayed with M. Durade and his wife, the Swiss painter amused himself by making a small portrait of her in oils—a head and shoulders. This painting remains in the possession of M. Durade, who has not merely refused to sell it, but will not allow it to be photographed or reproduced in any form. He has, however, we understand, consented to make a replica of it for Mr. Cross. We have not seen this interesting work, but we hear that it is considered by those who still remember the great writer as she looked in her thirtieth year, to be remarkably faithful. M. Durade recently exhibited this little picture for a few days at the Athénée in Geneva, but has refused to allow it to be brought to London."

The original was presented to the University Gallery in Geneva in 1886 by the sons of M. D'Albert Durade. Mr. Cross's copy was presented by him to the National Portrait Gallery, London.

THE PRIORY, 21, NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK 196

George Eliot's home from 1863 until 1876,—where she wrote "*Middlemarch*," "*Felix Holt*," and "*Daniel Deronda*." This house was the scene of the famous Sunday afternoon receptions, frequented by many persons of eminence in literature, art, and science.



ESSAYS



ESSAYS

WOMAN IN FRANCE : MADAME DE SABLÉ

IN 1847 a certain Count Leopold Ferri died at Padua, leaving a library entirely composed of works written by women, in various languages, and this library amounted to nearly thirty-two thousand volumes. We will not hazard any conjecture as to the proportion of these volumes which a severe judge, like the priest in *Don Quixote*, would deliver to the flames; but for our own part, most of those we should care to rescue would be the works of Frenchwomen. With a few remarkable exceptions, our own feminine literature is made up of books which could have been better written by men, — books which have the same relation to literature in general as academic prize poems have to poetry; when not a feeble imitation, they are usually an absurd exaggeration of the masculine style, like the swaggering gait of a bad actress in male attire. Few Englishwomen have written so much like a woman as Richardson's *Lady G.* Now we think it an immense mistake to maintain that there is no sex in literature. Science has no sex; the mere knowing and reasoning faculties, if they act correctly, must go through the same process, and arrive at the same result. But in art and literature, which imply the action of the entire being, in which every fibre of the nature is engaged, in which every peculiar modifi-

WOMAN IN FRANCE

cation of the individual makes itself felt, woman has something specific to contribute. Under every imaginable social condition, she will necessarily have a class of sensations and emotions, the maternal ones, which must remain unknown to man; and the fact of her comparative physical weakness, which, however it may have been exaggerated by a vicious civilization, can never be cancelled, introduces a distinctively feminine condition into the wondrous chemistry of the affections and sentiments, which inevitably gives rise to distinctive forms and combinations. A certain amount of psychological difference between man and woman necessarily arises out of the difference of sex, and, instead of being destined to vanish before a complete development of woman's intellectual and moral nature, will be a permanent source of variety and beauty, as long as the tender light and dewy freshness of morning affect us differently from the strength and brilliancy of the midday sun. And those delightful women of France, who, from the beginning of the seventeenth to the close of the eighteenth century, formed some of the brightest threads in the web of political and literary history, wrote under circumstances which left the feminine character of their minds uncramped by timidity and unstrained by mistaken effort. They were not trying to make a career for themselves; they thought little, in many cases not at all, of the public; they wrote letters to their lovers and friends, memoirs of their everyday lives, romances in which they gave portraits of their familiar acquaintances, and described the tragedy or comedy which was going on before their eyes. Always refined and graceful, often witty, some-

MADAME DE SABLÉ

times judicious, they wrote what they saw, thought, and felt, in their habitual language, without proposing any model to themselves, without any intention to prove that women could write as well as men, without affecting manly views or suppressing womanly ones. One may say, at least with regard to the women of the seventeenth century, that their writings were but a charming accident of their more charming lives, like the petals which the wind shakes from the rose in its bloom. And it is but a twin fact with this, that in France alone woman has had a vital influence on the development of literature; in France alone the mind of woman has passed like an electric current through the language, making crisp and definite what is elsewhere heavy and blurred; in France alone, if the writings of women were swept away, a serious gap would be made in the national history.

Patriotic gallantry may perhaps contend that English-women could, if they had liked, have written as well as their neighbours; but we will leave the consideration of that question to the reviewers of the literature that might have been. In the literature that actually is, we must turn to France for the highest examples of womanly achievement in almost every department. We confess ourselves unacquainted with the productions of those awful women of Italy who held professorial chairs, and were great in civil and canon law; we have made no researches into the catacombs of female literature, but we think we may safely conclude that they would yield no rivals to that which is still unburied; and here, we suppose, the question of pre-eminence can only lie be-

WOMAN IN FRANCE

tween England and France. And to this day Madame de Sévigné remains the single instance of a woman who is supreme in a class of literature which has engaged the ambition of men; Madame Dacier still reigns the queen of blue-stockings, though women have long studied Greek without shame; ¹ Madame de Staël's name still rises first to the lips when we are asked to mention a woman of great intellectual power; Madame Roland is still the unrivalled type of the sagacious and sternly heroic, yet lovable woman; George Sand is the unapproached artist, who, to Jean-Jacques' eloquence and deep sense of external nature, unites the clear delineation of character and the tragic depth of passion. These great names, which mark different epochs, soar like tall pines amidst a forest of less conspicuous, but not less fascinating, female writers; and beneath these, again, are spread, like the thicket of hawthorns, eglantines, and honeysuckles, the women who are known rather by what they stimulated men to write, than by what they wrote themselves — the women whose tact, wit, and personal radiance created the atmosphere of the Salon, where literature, philosophy, and science, emancipated from the trammels of pedantry and technicality, entered on a brighter stage of existence.

What were the causes of this earlier development and more abundant manifestation of womanly intellect in France? The primary one, perhaps, lies in the physio-

¹ Queen Christina, when Madame Dacier (then Mademoiselle Le Fèvre) sent her a copy of her edition of *Callimachus*, wrote in reply: "Mais vous, de qui on m'assure que vous êtes une belle et agréable fille, n'avez-vous pas honte d'être si savante?"

MADAME DE SABLÉ

logical characteristics of the Gallic race — the small brain and vivacious temperament which permit the fragile system of woman to sustain the superlative activity requisite for intellectual creativeness; while on the other hand, the larger brain and slower temperament of the English and Germans are, in the womanly organization, generally dreamy and passive. The type of humanity in the latter may be grander, but it requires a larger sum of conditions to produce a perfect specimen. Throughout the animal world, the higher the organization, the more frequent is the departure from the normal form; we do not often see imperfectly developed or ill-made insects, but we rarely see a perfectly developed, well-made man. And thus the physique of a woman may suffice as the substratum for a superior Gallic mind, but is too thin a soil for a superior Teutonic one. Our theory is borne out by the fact that, among our own countrywomen, those who distinguish themselves by literary production more frequently approach the Gallic than the Teutonic type; they are intense and rapid rather than comprehensive. The woman of large capacity can seldom rise beyond the absorption of ideas; her physical conditions refuse to support the energy required for spontaneous activity; the voltaic-pile is not strong enough to produce crystallizations; phantasms of great ideas float through her mind, but she has not the spell which will arrest them, and give them fixity. This, more than unfavourable external circumstances, is, we think, the reason why woman has not yet contributed any new form to art, any discovery in science, any deep-searching inquiry in philosophy. The necessary physiological con-

WOMAN IN FRANCE

ditions are not present in her. That under more favourable circumstances in the future, these conditions may prove compatible with the feminine organization, it would be rash to deny. For the present, we are only concerned with our theory so far as it presents a physiological basis for the intellectual effectiveness of French-women.

A secondary cause was probably the laxity of opinion and practice with regard to the marriage-tie. Heaven forbid that we should enter on a defence of French morals, most of all in relation to marriage! But it is undeniable that unions formed in the maturity of thought and feeling, and grounded only on inherent fitness and mutual attraction, tended to bring women into more intelligent sympathy with men, and to heighten and complicate their share in the political drama. The quiescence and security of the conjugal relation are doubtless favourable to the manifestation of the highest qualities by persons who have already attained a high standard of culture, but rarely foster a passion sufficient to rouse all the faculties to aid in winning or retaining its beloved object — to convert indolence into activity, indifference into ardent partisanship, dulness into perspicuity. Gallantry and intrigue are sorry enough things in themselves; but they certainly serve better to arouse the dormant faculties of woman than embroidery and domestic drudgery, especially when, as in the high society of France in the seventeenth century, they are refined by the influence of Spanish chivalry, and controlled by the spirit of Italian causticity. The dreamy and fantastic girl was awakened to reality by the experi-

MADAME DE SABLÉ

ence of wifehood and maternity, and became capable of loving, not a mere phantom of her own imagination, but a living man, struggling with the hatreds and rivalries of the political arena; she espoused his quarrels, she made herself, her fortune, and her influence the stepping-stones of his ambition; and the languid beauty, who had formerly seemed ready to "die of a rose," was seen to become the heroine of an insurrection. The vivid interest in affairs which was thus excited in woman must obviously have tended to quicken her intellect, and give it a practical application; and the very sorrows, the heart-pangs and regrets which are inseparable from a life of passion, deepened her nature by the questioning of self and destiny which they occasioned, and by the energy demanded to surmount them and live on. No wise person, we imagine, wishes to restore the social condition of France in the seventeenth century, or considers the ideal programme of woman's life to be a *mariage de convenance* at fifteen, a career of gallantry from twenty to eight-and-thirty, and penitence and piety for the rest of her days. Nevertheless, that social condition has its good results, as much as the madly superstitious Crusades had theirs.

But the most indisputable source of feminine culture and development in France was the influence of the salons; which, as all the world knows, were reunions of both sexes, where conversation ran along the whole gamut of subjects, from the frothiest *vers de société* to the philosophy of Descartes. Richelieu had set the fashion of uniting a taste for letters with the habits of polite society and the pursuits of ambition; and in the

WOMAN IN FRANCE

first quarter of the seventeenth century, there were already several hôtels in Paris, varying in social position from the closest proximity of the Court to the debateable ground of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, which served as a rendezvous for different circles of people, bent on entertaining themselves, either by showing talent or admiring it. The most celebrated of these rendezvous was the Hôtel de Rambouillet, which was at the culmination of its glory in 1630, and did not become quite extinct until 1648, when, the troubles of the Fronde commencing, its habitués were dispersed or absorbed by political interests. The presiding genius of this salon, the Marquise de Rambouillet, was the very model of the woman who can act as an amalgam to the most incongruous elements: beautiful, but not preoccupied by coquetry or passion; an enthusiastic admirer of talent, but with no pretension to talent on her own part; exquisitely refined in language and manners, but warm and generous withal; not given to entertain her guests with her own compositions, or to paralyze them by her universal knowledge. She had once meant to learn Latin, but had been prevented by an illness; perhaps she was all the better acquainted with Italian and Spanish productions, which, in default of a national literature, were then the intellectual pabulum of all cultivated persons in France who were unable to read the classics. In her mild, agreeable presence was accomplished that blending of the high-toned chivalry of Spain with the caustic wit and refined irony of Italy, which issued in the creation of a new standard of taste — the combination of the utmost exaltation in sentiment with the utmost

MADAME DE SABLÉ

simplicity of language. Women are peculiarly fitted to further such a combination, — first, from their greater tendency to mingle affection and imagination with passion, and thus subtilize it into sentiment; and next, from that dread of what overtaxes their intellectual energies, either by difficulty or monotony, which gives them an instinctive fondness for lightness of treatment and airiness of expression, thus making them cut short all prolixity and reject all heaviness. When these womanly characteristics were brought into conversational contact with the materials furnished by such minds as those of Richelieu, Corneille, the Great Condé, Balzac, and Bossuet, it is no wonder that the result was something piquant and charming. Those famous habitués of the Hôtel de Rambouillet did not apparently first lay themselves out to entertain the ladies with grimacing “small-talk” and then take each other by the sword-knot to discuss matters of real interest in a corner; they rather sought to present their best ideas in the guise most acceptable to intelligent and accomplished women. And the conversation was not of literature only; war, politics, religion, the lightest details of daily news — everything was admissible, if only it were treated with refinement and intelligence. The Hôtel de Rambouillet was no mere literary réunion; it included *hommes d'affaires* and soldiers as well as authors; and in such a circle women would not become *bas bleus* or dreamy moralizers, ignorant of the world and of human nature, but intelligent observers of character and events. It is easy to understand, however, that with the herd of imitators who, in Paris and the provinces, aped the style of

WOMAN IN FRANCE

this famous salon, simplicity degenerated into affectation, and nobility of sentiment was replaced by an inflated effort to outstrip nature, so that the *genre précieux* drew down the satire which reached its climax in the "Précieuses Ridicules" and "Les Femmes Savantes," the former of which appeared in 1660, and the latter in 1673. But Madelon and Caltros are the lineal descendants of Mademoiselle Scudéry and her satellites, quite as much as of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. The society which assembled every Saturday in her salon was exclusively literary, and, although occasionally visited by a few persons of high birth, bourgeois in its tone, and enamoured of madrigals, sonnets, stanzas, and *bouts rimés*. The affectation that decks trivial things in fine language belongs essentially to a class which sees another above it, and is uneasy in the sense of its inferiority; and this affectation is precisely the opposite of the original *genre précieux*.

Another centre, from which feminine influence radiated into the national literature, was the Palais du Luxembourg, where Mademoiselle d'Orléans, in disgrace at Court on account of her share in the Fronde, held a little court of her own, and for want of anything else to employ her active spirit, busied herself with literature. One fine morning, it occurred to this princess to ask all the persons who frequented her court, among whom were Madame de Sévigné, Madame de la Fayette, and La Rochefoucauld, to write their own portraits, and she at once set the example. It was understood that defects and virtues were to be spoken of with like candour. The idea was carried out, those who were not

MADAME DE SABLÉ

clever or bold enough to write for themselves employing the pen of a friend.

"Such," says M. Cousin, "was the pastime of Mademoiselle and her friends during the years 1657 and 1658; from this pastime proceeded a complete literature. In 1659 Ségrais revised these portraits, added a considerable number in prose and even in verse, and published the whole in a handsome quarto volume, admirably printed, and now become very rare, under the title, 'Divers Portraits.' Only thirty copies were printed, not for sale, but to be given as presents by Mademoiselle. The work had a prodigious success. That which had made the fortune of Mademoiselle de Scudéry's romances — the pleasure of seeing one's portrait a little flattered; curiosity to see that of others; the passion which the middle class always have had and will have, for knowing what goes on in the aristocratic world (at that time not very easy of access); the names of the illustrious persons who were here for the first time described physically and morally with the utmost detail; great ladies transformed all at once into writers, and unconsciously inventing a new manner of writing, of which no book gave the slightest idea, and which was the ordinary manner of speaking of the aristocracy; this undefinable mixture of the natural, the easy, and at the same time of the agreeable and supremely distinguished — all this charmed the Court and the town, and very early in the year 1659 permission was asked of Mademoiselle to give a new edition of the privileged book for the use of the public in general."

The fashion thus set, portraits multiplied throughout

WOMAN IN FRANCE

France, until in 1688, La Bruyère adopted the form in his "Characters," and ennobled it by divesting it of personality. We shall presently see that a still greater work than La Bruyère's also owed its suggestion to a woman, whose salon was hardly a less fascinating resort than the Hôtel de Rambouillet itself.

In proportion as the literature of a country is enriched and culture becomes more generally diffused, personal influence is less effective in the formation of taste and in the furtherance of social advancement. It is no longer the coterie which acts on literature, but literature which acts on the coterie; the circle represented by the word "public" is ever widening, and ambition, poisoning itself in order to hit a more distant mark, neglects the successes of the salon. What was once lavished prodigally in conversation is reserved for the volume or the "article"; and the effort is not to betray originality, rather than to communicate it. As the old coach-roads have sunk into disuse through the creation of railways, so journalism tends more and more to divert information from the channel of conversation into the channel of the Press; no one is satisfied with a more circumscribed audience than that very indeterminate abstraction "the public," and men find a vent for their opinions not in talk, but in "copy." We read the *Athenæum* askance at the tea-table, and take notes from the *Philosophical Journal* at a soirée; we invite our friends, that we may thrust a book into their hands, and presuppose an exclusive desire in the "ladies" to discuss their own matters, "that we may crackle the *Times*" at our ease. In fact the evident tendency of things to contract personal

MADAME DE SABLÉ

communication within the narrowest limits makes us tremble lest some further development of the electric telegraph should reduce us to a society of mutes, or to a sort of insects, communicating by ingenious antennæ of our own invention. Things were far from having reached this pass in the last century; but even then, literature and society had outgrown the nursing of coteries, and although many salons of that period were worthy successors of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, they were simply a recreation, not an influence. Enviably evenings, no doubt, were passed in them; and if we could be carried back to any of them at will, we should hardly know whether to choose the Wednesday dinner at Madame Geoffrin's, with d'Alembert, Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, Grimm, and the rest, or the graver society which, thirty years later, gathered round Condorcet and his lovely young wife. The salon retained its attractions, but its power was gone; the stream of life had become too broad and deep for such small rills to affect it.

A fair comparison between the Frenchwomen of the seventeenth century and those of the eighteenth would, perhaps, have a balanced result, though it is common to be a partisan on this subject. The former have more exaltation, perhaps more nobility of sentiment, and less consciousness in their intellectual activity — less of the *femme auteur*, which was Rousseau's horror in Madame d'Epinay; but the latter have a richer fund of ideas — not more ingenuity, but the materials of an additional century for their ingenuity to work upon. The women of the seventeenth century, when Love was on the wane, took to Devotion, — at first mildly and by

WOMAN IN FRANCE

halves, as Englishwomen take to caps, and finally without compromise; with the women of the eighteenth century, Bossuet and Massillon had given way to Voltaire and Rousseau; and when youth and beauty failed, then they were thrown on their own moral strength.

M. Cousin is especially enamoured of the women of the seventeenth century, and relieves himself from his labours in philosophy by making researches into the original documents which throw light upon their lives. Last year he gave us some results of these researches in a volume on the youth of the Duchesse de Longueville; and he has just followed it up with a second volume, in which he further illustrates her career by tracing it in connection with that of her friend, Madame de Sablé. The materials to which he has had recourse for this purpose are chiefly two celebrated collections of manuscript: that of Conrart, the first secretary to the French Academy, — one of those universally curious people who seem made for the annoyance of contemporaries and the benefit of posterity; and that of Valant, who was at once the physician, the secretary, and general steward of Madame de Sablé, and who, with or without her permission, possessed himself of the letters addressed to her by her numerous correspondents during the latter part of her life, and of various papers having some personal or literary interest attached to them. From these stores M. Cousin has selected many documents previously unedited; and though he often leaves us something to desire in the arrangement of his materials, this volume of his on Madame de Sablé is very acceptable to us, for she interests us quite enough to carry us through more

MADAME DE SABLÉ

than three hundred pages of rather scattered narrative, and through an appendix of correspondence in small type. M. Cousin justly appreciates her character as “un heureux mélange de raison, d’esprit, d’agrément, et de bonté”; and perhaps there are few better specimens of the woman who is extreme in nothing, but sympathetic in all things; who affects us by no special quality, but by her entire being; whose nature has no *tons criards*, but is like those textures which, from their harmonious blending of all colours, give repose to the eye, and do not weary us though we see them every day. Madame de Sablé is also a striking example of the one order of influence which woman has exercised over literature in France; and on this ground, as well as intrinsically, she is worth studying. If the reader agrees with us he will perhaps be inclined, as we are, to dwell a little on the chief points in her life and character.

Madeline de Souvré — daughter of the Marquis of Courtenvaux, a nobleman distinguished enough to be chosen as governor of Louis XIII — was born in 1599, on the threshold of that seventeenth century, the brilliant genius of which is mildly reflected in her mind and history. Thus when in 1635 her more celebrated friend, Mademoiselle de Bourbon, afterwards the Duchesse de Longueville, made her appearance at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, Madame de Sablé had nearly crossed that tableland of maturity which precedes a woman’s descent towards old age. She had been married, in 1614, to Philippe Emanuel de Laval-Montmorency, Seigneur de Bois-Dauphin, and Marquis de Sablé, of whom nothing further is known than that he died in 1640,

WOMAN IN FRANCE

leaving her the richer by four children, but with a fortune considerably embarrassed. With beauty and high rank, added to the mental attractions of which we have abundant evidence, we may well believe that Madame de Sablé's youth was brilliant. For her beauty we have the testimony of sober Madame de Motteville, who also speaks of her as having "*beaucoup de lumière et de sincérité*," and in the following passage very graphically indicates one phase of Madame de Sablé's character: —

"The Marquise de Sablé was one of those whose beauty made the most noise when the Queen came into France. But if she was amiable, she was still more desirous of appearing so; this lady's self-love rendered her too sensitive to the regard which men exhibited towards her. There yet existed in France some remains of the politeness which Catherine de' Medici had introduced from Italy, and the new dramas, with all the other works in prose and verse, which came from Madrid, were thought to have such delicacy, that she [Madame de Sablé] had conceived a high idea of the gallantry which the Spaniards had learned from the Moors.

"She was persuaded that men can, without crime, have tender sentiments for women — that the desire of pleasing them led men to the greatest and finest actions, roused their intelligence, and inspired them with liberality, and all sorts of virtues; but, on the other hand, women, who were the ornament of the world, and made to be served and adored, ought not to admit anything from them but their respectful attentions. As this lady supported her views with much talent and great beauty,

MADAME DE SABLÉ

she had given them authority in her time; and the number and consideration of those who continued to associate with her, have caused to subsist in our day what the Spaniards call *finezas*."

Here is the grand element of the original *femme précieuse*, and it appears further, in a detail also reported by Madame de Motteville, that Madame de Sablé had a passionate admirer in the accomplished Duc de Montmorency, and apparently reciprocated his regard; but discovering (at what period of their attachment is unknown) that he was raising a lover's eyes towards the Queen, she broke with him at once. "I have heard her say," tells Madame de Motteville, "that her pride was such with regard to the Duc de Montmorency that, at the first demonstrations which he gave of his change, she refused to see him any more, being unable to receive with satisfaction attentions which she had to share with the greatest princess in the world." There is no evidence, except the untrustworthy assertion of Tallemant des Réaux, that Madame de Sablé had any other liaison than this; and the probability of the negative is increased by the ardour of her friendships. The strongest of these was formed early in life with Mademoiselle Dona d'Attichy, afterwards Comtesse de Maure; it survived the effervescence of youth, and the closest intimacy of middle age, and was only terminated by the death of the latter in 1663. A little incident in this friendship is so characteristic in the transcendentalism which was then carried into all the affections that it is worth relating at length. Mademoiselle d'Attichy, in her grief and indignation at Richelieu's treatment of her relative, quitted

WOMAN IN FRANCE

Paris, and was about to join her friend at Sablé, when she suddenly discovered that Madame de Sablé, in a letter to Madame de Rambouillet, had said that her greatest happiness would be to pass her life with Julie de Rambouillet, afterwards Madame de Montausier. To Anne d'Attichy this appears nothing less than the crime of *lèse-amitié*. No explanations will appease her; she refuses to accept the assurance that the offensive expression was used simply out of unreflecting conformity to the style of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, that it was mere *galimatias*. She gives up her journey, and writes a letter, which is the only one Madame de Sablé chose to preserve when, in her period of devotion, she sacrificed the records of her youth. Here it is:—

“I have seen this letter in which you tell me there is so much *galimatias*, and I assure you that I have not found any at all. On the contrary, I find everything very plainly expressed, and among others, one which is too explicit for my satisfaction — namely, what you have said to Madame de Rambouillet, that if you tried to imagine a perfectly happy life for yourself, it would be to pass it all alone with Mademoiselle de Rambouillet. You know whether any one can be more persuaded than I am of her merit; but I confess to you that that has not prevented me from being surprised that you could entertain a thought which did so great an injury to our friendship. As to believing that you said this to one, and wrote it to the other, simply for the sake of paying them an agreeable compliment, I have too high an esteem for your courage to be able to imagine that complaisance would cause you thus to betray the sentiments of your

MADAME DE SABLÉ

heart, especially on a subject in which, as they were unfavourable to me, I think you would have the more reason for concealing them, the affection which I have for you being so well known to every one, and especially to Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, so that I doubt whether she will not have been more sensible of the wrong you have done me than of the advantage you have given her. The circumstance of this letter falling into my hands has forcibly reminded me of these lines of Bertaut: —

‘Malheureuse est l’ignorance,
Et plus malheureux le savoir.’

“Having through this lost a confidence which alone rendered life supportable to me, it is impossible for me to take the journey so much thought of. For would there be any propriety in travelling sixty miles in this season in order to burthen you with a person so little suited to you, that, after years of a passion without parallel, you cannot help thinking that the greatest pleasure of your life would be to pass it without her? I return, then, into my solitude, to examine the defects which cause me so much unhappiness, and unless I can correct them, I should have less joy than confusion in seeing you.”

It speaks strongly for the charm of Madame de Sablé’s nature that she was able to retain so susceptible a friend as Mademoiselle d’Attichy in spite of numerous other friendships, some of which, especially that with Madame de Longueville, were far from lukewarm — in spite too of a tendency in herself to distrust the affection of others towards her, and to wait for advances rather than to make them. We find many traces of this tendency in the

WOMAN IN FRANCE

affectionate remonstrances addressed to her by Madame de Longueville, now for shutting herself up from her friends, now for doubting that her letters are acceptable. Here is a little passage from one of these remonstrances, which indicates a trait of Madame de Sablé, and is in itself a bit of excellent sense, worthy the consideration of lovers and friends in general: "I am very much afraid that if I leave to you the care of letting me know when I can see you, I shall be a long time without having that pleasure, and that nothing will incline you to procure it for me; for I have always observed a certain lukewarmness in your friendship after our *explanations*, from which I have never seen you thoroughly recover; and that is why I dread explanations, for however good they may be in themselves, since they serve to reconcile people, it must always be admitted, to their shame, that they are at least the effect of a bad cause, and that if they remove it for a time they *sometimes leave a certain facility in getting angry again*, which, without diminishing friendship, renders its intercourse less agreeable. It seems to me that I find all this in your behaviour to me; so I am not wrong in sending to know if you wish to have me to-day." It is clear that Madame de Sablé was far from having what Sainte-Beuve calls the one fault of Madame Necker, absolute perfection. A certain exquisiteness in her physical and moral nature was, as we shall see, the source of more than one weakness; but the perception of these weaknesses, which is indicated in Madame de Longueville's letters, heightens our idea of the attractive qualities which, notwithstanding, drew from her, at the sober age of forty, such expressions as

MADAME DE SABLÉ

these: "I assure you that you are the person in all the world whom it would be most agreeable to me to see, and there is no one whose intercourse is a ground of truer satisfaction to me. It is admirable that at all times, and amidst all changes, the taste for your society remains in me; and, *if one ought to thank God for the joys which do not tend to salvation*, I should thank him with all my heart for having preserved that to me at a time in which he has taken away from me all others."

Since we have entered on the chapter of Madame de Sablé's weaknesses, this is the place to mention what was the subject of endless raillery from her friends — her elaborate precaution about her health, and her dread of infection, even from diseases the least communicable. Perhaps this anxiety was founded as much on æsthetic as on physical grounds, on disgust at the details of illness as much as on dread of suffering; with a cold in the head or a bilious complaint, the exquisite *précieuse* must have been considerably less conscious of being "the ornament of the world," and "made to be adored." Even her friendship, strong as it was, was not strong enough to overcome her horror of contagion; for when Mademoiselle de Bourbon, recently become Madame de Longueville, was attacked by small-pox, Madame de Sablé for some time had not courage to visit her or even to see Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, who was assiduous in her attendance on the patient. A little correspondence, apropos of these circumstances, so well exhibits the graceful badinage in which the great ladies of that day were adepts, that we are tempted to quote one short letter.

WOMAN IN FRANCE

Mademoiselle de Rambouillet to the Marquise de Sablé.

Mademoiselle de Chalais [*dame de compagnie* to the Marquise] will please to read this letter to Madame la Marquise, *out of* a draught.

MADAME, — I do not think it possible to begin my treaty with you too early, for I am convinced that between the first proposition made to me that I should see you, and the conclusion, you will have so many reflections to make, so many physicians to consult, and so many fears to surmount, that I shall have full leisure to air myself. The conditions which I offer to fulfil for this purpose are, not to visit you until I have been three days absent from the Hôtel de Condé [where Madame de Longueville was ill], to choose a frosty day, not to approach you within four paces, not to sit down on more than one seat. You may also have a great fire in your room, burn juniper in the four corners, surround yourself with imperial vinegar, with rue and wormwood. If you can feel yourself safe under these conditions, without my cutting off my hair, I swear to you to execute them religiously; and if you want examples to fortify you, I can tell you that the Queen consented to see M. Chaudelbonne, when he had come directly from Mademoiselle de Bourbon's room, and that Madame d'Aiguillon, who has good taste in such matters, and is free from reproach on these points, has just sent me word that if I did not go to see her, she would come to me.

Madame de Sablé betrays in her reply that she winces under this raillery, and thus provokes a rather severe

MADAME DE SABLÉ

though polite rejoinder, which, added to the fact that Madame de Longueville is convalescent, rouses her courage to the pitch of paying the formidable visit. Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, made aware, through their mutual friend Voiture, that her sarcasm has cut rather too deep, winds up the matter by writing that very difficult production, a perfectly conciliatory yet dignified apology. Peculiarities like this always deepen with age; and accordingly, fifteen years later, we find Madame D'Orléans, in her "*Princesse de Paphlagonia*," — a romance in which she describes her court, with the little quarrels and other affairs that agitated it, — giving the following amusing picture, or rather caricature, of the extent to which Madame de Sablé carried her pathological mania, which seems to have been shared by her friend the Countess de Maure (Mademoiselle d'Attichy). In the romance, these two ladies appear under the names of *Princesse Parthénie* and the *Reine de Mionie*.

"There was not an hour in the day in which they did not confer together on the means of avoiding death, and on the art of rendering themselves immortal. Their conferences did not take place like those of other people; the fear of breathing an air which was too cold or too warm, the dread lest the wind should be too dry or too moist — in short, the imagination that the weather might not be as temperate as they thought necessary for the preservation of their health, caused them to write letters from one room to the other. It would be extremely fortunate if these notes could be found, and formed into a collection. I am convinced that they would contain rules for the regimen of life, precautions even

WOMAN IN FRANCE

as to the proper time for applying remedies, and also remedies which Hippocrates and Galen, with all their science, never heard of. Such a collection would be very useful to the public, and would be highly profitable to the faculties of Paris and Montpellier. If these letters were discovered, great advantages of all kinds might be derived from them, for they were princesses who had nothing mortal about them but the *knowledge* that they were mortal. In their writings might be learned all politeness in style, and the most delicate manner of speaking on all subjects. There is nothing with which they were not acquainted: they knew the affairs of all the states in the world, through the share they had in all the intrigues of its private members, either in matters of gallantry, as in other things on which their advice was necessary, either to adjust embroilments and quarrels, or to excite them, for the sake of the advantages which their friends could derive from them, — in a word, they were persons through whose hands the secrets of the whole world had to pass. The Princess Parthénie [Madame de Sablé] had a palate as delicate as her mind; nothing could equal the magnificence of the entertainments she gave; all the dishes were exquisite, and her cleanliness was beyond all that could be imagined. It was in their time that writing came into use; previously, nothing was written but marriage contracts, and letters were never heard of; thus it is to them that we owe a practice so convenient in intercourse."

Still later, in 1669, when the most uncompromising of the Port Royalists seemed to tax Madame de Sablé with lukewarmness that she did not join them at Port-

MADAME DE SABLÉ

Royal-des-Champs, we find her writing to the stern M. de Sévigny: "En vérité, je crois que je ne pourrais mieux faire que de tout quitter et de m'en aller là. Mais que deviendroient ces frayeurs de n'avoir pas de médecines à choisir, ni de chirurgien pour me saigner?"

Mademoiselle, as we have seen, hints at the love of delicate eating, which many of Madame de Sablé's friends numbered among her foibles, especially after her religious career had commenced. She had a genius in *friandise*, and knew how to gratify the palate without offending the highest sense of refinement. Her sympathetic nature showed itself in this as in other things; she was always sending *bonnes bouches* to her friends, and trying to communicate to them her science and taste in the affairs of the table. Madame de Longueville, who had not the luxurious tendencies of her friend, writes: "Je vous demande, au nom de Dieu, que vous ne me prépariez aucun ragoût. Surtout, ne me donnez point de festin. Au nom de Dieu, qu'il n'y ait rien que ce qu'on peut manger, car vous savez que c'est inutile pour moi; de plus, j'en ai scrupule." But other friends had more appreciation of her niceties. Voiture thanks her for her melons, and assures her that they are better than those of yesterday; Madame de Choisy hopes that her ridicule of Jansenism will not provoke Madame de Sablé to refuse her the receipt for salad; and La Rochefoucauld writes: "You cannot do me a greater charity than to permit the bearer of this letter to enter into the mysteries of your marmalade and your genuine preserves, and I humbly entreat you to do everything you can in his favour. If I could hope for two dishes of those

WOMAN IN FRANCE

preserves, which I did not deserve to eat before, I should be indebted to you all my life." For our own part, being as far as possible from fraternizing with those spiritual people who convert a deficiency into a principle, and pique themselves on an obtuse palate as a point of superiority, we are not inclined to number Madame de Sablé's *friandise* amongst her defects. M. Cousin, too, is apologetic on this point. He says:—

"It was only the excess of a delicacy which can be readily understood, and a sort of fidelity to the character of *précieuse*. As the *précieuse* did nothing according to common usage, she could not dine like another. We have cited a passage from Madame de Motteville, where Madame de Sablé is represented in her first youth at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, maintaining that woman is born to be an ornament to the world, and to receive the adoration of men. The woman worthy of the name ought always to appear above material wants, and retain, even in the most vulgar details of life, something distinguished and purified. Eating is a very necessary operation, but one which is not agreeable to the eye. Madame de Sablé insisted on its being conducted with a peculiar cleanliness. According to her, it was not every woman who could with impunity be at table in the presence of a lover; the first distortion of the face, she said, would be enough to spoil all. Gross meals, made for the body merely, ought to be abandoned to bourgeois, and the refined woman should appear to take a little nourishment merely to sustain her, and even to divert her, as one takes refreshments and ices. Wealth did not suffice for this; a particular talent was required. Madame de Sablé

MADAME DE SABLÉ

was a mistress in this art. She had transported the aristocratic spirit, and the *genre précieux*, good-breeding, and good taste, even into cookery. Her dinners, without any opulence, were celebrated and sought after."

It is quite in accordance with all this that Madame de Sablé should delight in fine scents, and we find that she did; for being threatened, in her Port Royal days, when she was at an advanced age, with the loss of smell, and writing for sympathy and information to Mère Agnès, who had lost that sense early in life, she receives this admonition from the stern saint: "You would gain by this loss, my very dear sister, if you made use of it as a satisfaction to God, for having had too much pleasure in delicious scents." Scarron describes her as

"La non pareille Bois-Dauphine,
Entre dames perle très fine";

and the superlative delicacy implied by this epithet seems to have belonged equally to her personal habits, her affections, and her intellect.

Madame de Sablé's life, for anything we know, flowed on evenly enough until 1640, when the death of her husband threw upon her the care of an embarrassed fortune. She found a friend in René de Longueil, Seigneur de Maisons, of whom we are content to know no more than that he helped Madame de Sablé to arrange her affairs, though only by means of alienating from her family the estate of Sablé; that his house was her refuge during the blockade of Paris, in 1649; and that she was not unmindful of her obligations to him, when subsequently her credit could be serviceable to him at Court. In the midst of these pecuniary troubles came a more

WOMAN IN FRANCE

terrible trial, — the loss of her favourite son, the brave and handsome Guy de Laval, who, after a brilliant career in the campaigns of Condé, was killed at the siege of Dunkirk, in 1646, when scarcely four-and-twenty. The fine qualities of this young man had endeared him to the whole army, and especially to Condé, had won him the hand of the Chancellor Séguier's daughter, and had thus opened to him the prospect of the highest honours. His loss seems to have been the most real sorrow of Madame de Sablé's life. Soon after followed the commotions of the Fronde, which put a stop to social intercourse, and threw the closest friends into opposite ranks. According to Lenet, who relies on the authority of Gourville, Madame de Sablé was under strong obligations to the Court, being in the receipt of a pension of two thousand crowns; at all events, she adhered throughout to the Queen and Mazarin, but being as far as possible from a fierce partisan, and given both by disposition and judgement to hear both sides of the question, she acted as a conciliator, and retained her friends of both parties. The Comtesse de Maure, whose husband was the most obstinate of Frondeurs, remained throughout her most cherished friend, and she kept up a constant correspondence with the lovely and intrepid heroine of the Fronde, Madame de Longueville. Her activity was directed to the extinction of animosities, by bringing about marriages between the Montagues and Capulets of the Fronde, — between the Prince de Condé, or his brother, and the niece of Mazarin, or between the three nieces of Mazarin and the sons of three noblemen who were distinguished leaders of the

MADAME DE SABLÉ

Fronde. Though her projects were not realized, her conciliatory position enabled her to preserve all her friendships intact; and when the political tempest was over, she could assemble around her, in her residence in the Place Royale, the same society as before. Madame de Sablé was now approaching her twelfth lustrum; and though the charms of her mind and character made her more sought after than most younger women, it is not surprising that, sharing as she did in the religious ideas of her time, the concerns of "salvation" seemed to become pressing. A religious retirement, which did not exclude the reception of literary friends or the care for personal comforts, made the most becoming frame for age and diminished fortune. Jansenism was then, to ordinary Catholicism, what Puseyism is to ordinary Church-of-Englandism in these days; it was a *recherché* form of piety unshared by the vulgar; and one sees at once that it must have special attractions for the *précieuse*. Madame de Sablé, then, probably about 1655 or 1656, determined to retire to Port Royal, not because she was already devout, but because she hoped to become so; as, however, she wished to retain the pleasure of intercourse with friends who were still worldly, she built for herself a set of apartments, at once distinct from the monastery and attached to it. Here, with a comfortable establishment, consisting of her secretary, Dr. Valant; Mademoiselle de Chalais, formerly her *dame de compagnie*, and now become her friend; an excellent cook; a few other servants; and for a considerable time a carriage and coachman; with her best friends within a moderate distance, she could, as M.

WOMAN IN FRANCE

Cousin says, be out of the noise of the world without altogether forsaking it, preserve her dearest friendships, and have before her eyes edifying examples, — “vaquer enfin à son aise aux soins de son salut et à ceux de sa santé.”

We have, hitherto, looked only at one phase of Madame de Sablé's character and influence, that of the *précieuse*. But she was much more than this: she was the valuable, trusted friend of noble women and distinguished men; she was the animating spirit of a society whence issued a new form of French literature; she was the woman of large capacity and large heart, whom Pascal sought to please, to whom Arnauld submitted the Discourse prefixed to his “Logic,” and to whom La Rochefoucauld writes: “Vous savez que je ne crois que vous sur de certains chapitres, et surtout sur les replis du cœur.” The papers preserved by her secretary, Valant, show that she maintained an extensive correspondence with persons of various rank and character; that her pen was untiring in the interest of others; that men made her the depositary of their thoughts, women of their sorrows; that her friends were as impatient, when she secluded herself, as if they had been rival lovers, and she a youthful beauty. It is into her ear that Madame de Longueville pours her troubles and difficulties, and that Madame de la Fayette communicates her little alarms, lest young Count de St. Paul should have detected her intimacy with La Rochefoucauld.¹ The few of Madame de Sablé's letters which

¹ The letter to which we allude has this charming little touch: “Je hais comme la mort que les gens de son âge puissent croire que j'ai des

MADAME DE SABLÉ

survive show that she excelled in that epistolary style which was the specialty of the Hôtel de Rambouillet : one to Madame de Montausier, in favour of M. Périer, the brother-in-law of Pascal, is a happy mixture of good taste and good sense ; but amongst them all, we prefer quoting one to the Duchesse de la Tremouille. It is light and pretty, and made out of almost nothing, like soap-bubbles.

“ Je crois qu’il n’y a que moi qui face si bien tout le contraire de ce que je veux faire, car il est vrai qu’il n’y a personne que j’honore plus que vous, et j’ai si bien fait qu’il est quasi impossible que vous le puissiez croire. Ce n’estoit pas assez pour vous persuader que je suis indigne de vos bonnes grâces et de votre souvenir que d’avoir manqué fort longtemps à vous écrire ; il falloit encore retarder quinze jours à me donner l’honneur de répondre à votre lettre. En vérité, Madame, cela me fait paroître si coupable, que vers tout autre que vous j’aimeroix mieux l’être en effet que d’entreprendre une chose si difficile qu’est celle de me justifier. Mais je me sens si innocente dans mon âme, et j’ai tant d’estime, de respect, et d’affection pour vous, qu’il me semble que vous devez le connoître à cent lieues de distance d’ici, encore que je ne vous dise pas un mot. C’est ce que me donne le courage de vous écrire à cette heure, mais non pas ce qui m’en a empêché si longtemps. J’ai commencé à faillir par force, ayant eu beaucoup de maux, et depuis je l’ai faite par honte, et je vous avoue que si je n’avois

galanteries. Il semble qu’on leur parait cent ans dès qu’on est plus vieille qu’eux, et ils sont tout propre à s’étonner qu’il y ait encore question des gens.”

WOMAN IN FRANCE

à cette heure la confiance que vous m'avez donné en me rassurant, et celle que je tire de mes propres sentimens pour vous, je n'oserois jamais entreprendre de vous faire souvenir de moi; mais je m'assure que vous oublierez tout, sur la protestation que je vous fais de ne me laisser plus endurcir en mes fautes et de demeurer inviolablement, Madame, votre, etc."

Was not the woman who could unite the ease and grace indicated by this letter with an intellect that men thought worth consulting on matters of reasoning and philosophy, with warm affections, untiring activity for others, no ambition as an authoress, and an insight into confitures and ragoûts, a rare combination? No wonder that her salon at Port Royal was the favourite resort of such women as Madame de la Fayette, Madame de Montausier, Madame de Longueville, and Madame de Hautefort, and of such men as Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Nicole, and Domat. The collections of Valant contain papers which show what were the habitual subjects of conversation in this salon. Theology, of course, was a chief topic; but physics and metaphysics had their turn, and still more frequently morals, taken in their widest sense. There were "Conferences on Calvinism," of which an abstract is preserved. When Rohault invented his glass tubes to serve for the barometrical experiments in which Pascal had roused a strong interest, the Marquis de Sourdis entertained the society with a paper entitled, "Why water mounts in a glass tube." Cartesianism was an exciting topic here, as well as everywhere else in France; it had its partisans and opponents, and papers were read, containing "Thoughts

MADAME DE SABLÉ

on the opinions of M. Descartes." These lofty matters were varied by discussions on love and friendship, on the drama, and on most of the things in heaven and earth which the philosophy of that day dreamt of. Morals — generalizations on human affections, sentiments, and conduct — seem to have been the favourite theme; and the aim was to reduce these generalizations to their briefest form of expression, to give them the epigrammatic turn which made them portable in the memory. This was the specialty of Madame de Sablé's circle, and was probably due to her own tendency. As the Hôtel de Rambouillet was the nursery of graceful letter-writing, and the Luxembourg of "portraits" and "characters," so Madame de Sablé's salon fostered that taste for the sententious style, to which we owe, probably, some of the best "Pensées" of Pascal, and, certainly, the "Maxims" of La Rochefoucauld. Madame de Sablé herself wrote maxims, which were circulated among her friends and, after her death, were published by the Abbé d'Ailly. They have the excellent sense and nobility of feeling, which we should expect in everything of hers, but they have no stamp of genius or individual character; they are, to the "Maxims" of La Rochefoucauld, what the vase moulded in dull, heavy clay is to the vase which the action of fire has made light, brittle, and transparent. She also wrote a treatise on Education, which is much praised by La Rochefoucauld and M. d'Andilly, but which seems no longer to be found; probably it was not much more elaborate than her so-called "Treatise on Friendship," which is but a short string of maxims. Madame de Sablé's forte was evidently not

WOMAN IN FRANCE

to write herself, but to stimulate others to write, — to show that sympathy and appreciation which are as genial and encouraging as the morning sunbeams. She seconded a man's wit with understanding, one of the best offices which womanly intellect has rendered to the advancement of culture; and the absence of originality made her all the more receptive towards the originality of others.

The manuscripts of Pascal show that many of the "Pensées," which are commonly supposed to be raw materials for a great work on religion, were remodelled again and again, in order to bring them to the highest degree of terseness and finish, which would hardly have been the case if they had only been part of a quarry for a greater production. Thoughts which are merely collected as materials, as stones out of which a building is to be erected, are not cut into facets, and polished like amethysts or emeralds. Since Pascal was from the first in the habit of visiting Madame de Sablé at Port Royal, with his sister Madame Périer (who was one of Madame de Sablé's dearest friends), we may well suppose that he would throw some of his jewels among the large and small coin of maxims which were a sort of subscription-money there. Many of them have an epigrammatic piquancy which was just the thing to charm a circle of vivacious and intelligent women: they seem to come from a La Rochefoucauld who has been dipped over again in philosophy and wit and received a new layer. But whether or not Madame de Sablé's influence served to enrich the "Pensées" of Pascal, it is clear that but for her influence the "Maxims" of La Rochefoucauld

MADAME DE SABLÉ

would never have existed. Just as in some circles the effort is who shall make the best puns (*horribile dictu!*) or the best charades, in the salon of Port Royal the amusement was to fabricate maxims. La Rochefoucauld said, "L'envie de faire des maximes se gagne comme le rhume." So far from claiming for himself the initiation of this form of writing, he accuses Jacques Esprit, another habitué of Madame de Sablé's salon, of having excited in him the taste for maxims in order to trouble his repose. The said Esprit was an academician, and had been a frequenter of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. He had already published "Maxims in Verse," and he subsequently produced a book called "La Fausseté des Vertus Humaines," which seems to consist of Rochefoucauldism become flat with an infusion of sour Calvinism. Nevertheless, La Rochefoucauld seems to have prized him, to have appealed to his judgement, and to have concocted maxims with him, which he afterwards begs him to submit to Madame de Sablé. He sends a little batch of maxims to her himself, and asks for an equivalent in the shape of good eatables: "Voilà tout ce que j'ai de maximes; mais comme je ne donne rien pour rien, je vous demande un potage aux carottes, un ragoût de mouton," etc. The taste and the talent enhanced each other, until at last La Rochefoucauld began to be conscious of his pre-eminence in the circle of maxim-mongers, and thought of a wider audience. Thus grew up the famous "Maxims," about which little need be said. Every one is now convinced, or professes to be convinced, that as to form they are perfect, and that as to matter they are at once undeniably true and

WOMAN IN FRANCE

miserably false; true as applied to that condition of human nature in which the selfish instincts are still dominant, false if taken as a representation of all the elements and possibilities of human nature. We think La Rochefoucauld himself wavered as to their universality, and that this wavering is indicated in the qualified form of some of the maxims; it occasionally struck him that the shadow of virtue must have a substance, but he had never grasped that substance; it had never been present to his consciousness.

It is curious to see La Rochefoucauld's nervous anxiety about presenting himself before the public as an author; far from rushing into print, he stole into it, and felt his way by asking private opinions. Through Madame de Sablé he sent manuscript copies to various persons of taste and talent, both men and women, and many of the written opinions which she received in reply are still in existence. The women generally find the maxims distasteful, but the men write approvingly. These men, however, are for the most part ecclesiastics, who decry human nature that they may exalt divine grace. The coincidence between Augustinianism, or Calvinism, with its doctrine of human corruption, and the hard cynicism of the maxims, presents itself in quite a piquant form in some of the laudatory opinions on La Rochefoucauld. One writer says: "On ne pourroit faire une instruction plus propre à un catéchumène pour convertir à Dieu son esprit et sa volonté. . . . Quand il n'y auroit que cet escrit au monde et l'Evangile je voudrois être chrétien. L'un m'apprendroit à connoître mes misères, et l'autre à implorer mon libérateur." Ma-

MADAME DE SABLÉ

dame de Maintenon sends word to La Rochefoucauld, after the publication of his work, that the "Book of Job" and the "Maxims" are her only reading.

That Madame de Sablé herself had a tolerably just idea of La Rochefoucauld's character, as well as of his maxims, may be gathered not only from the fact that her own maxims are as full of the confidence in human goodness which La Rochefoucauld wants, as they are empty of the style which he possesses, but also from a letter in which she replies to the criticisms of Madame de Schomberg. "The author," she says, "derived the maxim on indolence from his own disposition, for never was there so great an indolence as his; and I think that his heart, inert as it is, owes this defect as much to his idleness as his will. It has never permitted him to do the least action for others; and I think that, amidst all his great desires and great hopes, he is sometimes indolent even on his own behalf." Still she must have felt a hearty interest in the "Maxims," as in some degree her foster-child, and she must also have had considerable affection for the author, who was loveable enough to those who observed the rule of Helvetius, and expected nothing from him. She not only assisted him, as we have seen, in getting criticisms, and carrying out the improvements suggested by them, but when the book was actually published, she prepared a notice of it for the only journal then existing — the *Journal des Savants*. This notice was originally a brief statement of the nature of the work, and the opinions which had been formed for and against it, with a moderate eulogy, in conclusion, on its good sense, wit, and insight into human nature.

WOMAN IN FRANCE

But when she submitted it to La Rochefoucauld he objected to the paragraph which stated the adverse opinion, and requested her to alter it. She, however, was either unable or unwilling to modify her notice, and returned it with the following note:—

“ Je vous envoie ce que j’ai pu tirer de ma teste pour mettre dans le *Journal des Savants*. J’y ai mis cet endroit qui vous est le plus sensible, afin que cela vous fasse surmonter la mauvaise honte qui vous fit mettre la préface sans y rien retrancher, et je n’ai pas craint de le mettre, parce que je suis assurée que vous ne le ferez pas imprimer, quand même le reste vous plairait. Je vous assure aussi que je vous serai plus obligée, si vous en usez comme d’une chose qui sert à vous pour le corriger ou pour le jeter au feu. Nous autres grands auteurs, nous sommes trop riches pour craindre de rien perdre de nos productions. Mandez-moi ce qu’il vous semble de ce dictum.”

La Rochefoucauld availed himself of this permission, and “edited” the notice, touching up the style, and leaving out the blame. In this revised form it appeared in the *Journal des Savants*. In some points, we see, the youth of journalism was not without promise of its future.

While Madame de Sablé was thus playing the literary confidante to La Rochefoucauld, and was the soul of a society whose chief interest was the belles-lettres, she was equally active in graver matters. She was in constant intercourse of correspondence with the devout women of Port Royal, and of the neighbouring convent of the Carmelites, many of whom had once been the

MADAME DE SABLÉ

ornaments of the Court; and there is a proof that she was conscious of being highly valued by them, in the fact that when the Princesse Marie-Madeline, of the Carmelites, was dangerously ill, not being able or not daring to visit her, she sent her youthful portrait to be hung up in the sick-room, and received from the same Mère Agnès, whose grave admonition we have quoted above, a charming note, describing the pleasure which the picture had given in the infirmary of Notre Bonne Mère. She was interesting herself deeply in the translation of the New Testament, which was the work of Sacy, Arnauld, Nicole, Le Maître, and the Duc de Luynes conjointly, Sacy having the principal share. We have mentioned that Arnauld asked her opinion on the Discourse prefixed to his "Logic," and we may conclude from this that he had found her judgement valuable in many other cases. Moreover, the persecution of the Port Royalists had commenced, and she was uniting with Madame de Longueville in aiding and protecting her pious friends. Moderate in her Jansenism, as in everything else, she held that the famous formulary denouncing the Augustinian doctrine and declaring it to have been originated by Jansenius should be signed without reserve, and, as usual, she had faith in conciliatory measures; but her moderation was no excuse for inaction. She was at one time herself threatened with the necessity of abandoning her residence at Port Royal, and had thought of retiring to a religious house at Auteuil, a village near Paris. She did, in fact, pass some summers there, and she sometimes took refuge with her brother, the Commandeur de Souvré, with Madame de Mon-

WOMAN IN FRANCE

tausier, or Madame de Longueville. The last was much bolder in her partisanship than her friend, and her superior wealth and position enabled her to give the Port Royalists more efficient aid. Arnauld and Nicole resided five years in her house; it was under her protection that the translation of the New Testament was carried on and completed, and it was chiefly through her efforts that, in 1669, the persecution was brought to an end. Madame de Sablé co-operated with all her talent and interest in the same direction; but here, as elsewhere, her influence was chiefly valuable in what she stimulated others to do, rather than in what she did herself. It was by her that Madame de Longueville was first won to the cause of Port Royal; and we find this ardent, brave woman constantly seeking the advice and sympathy of her more timid and self-indulgent, but sincere and judicious friend.

In 1669, when Madame de Sablé had at length rest from these anxieties, she was at the good old age of seventy, but she lived nine years longer — years, we may suppose, chiefly dedicated to her spiritual concerns. This gradual, calm decay allayed the fear of death, which had tormented her more vigorous days, and she died with tranquillity and trust. It is a beautiful trait of these last moments, that she desired not to be buried with her family, or even at Port Royal, among her saintly and noble companions, but in the cemetery of her parish, like one of the people, without pomp or ceremony.

It is worth while to notice that, with Madame de Sablé, as with some other remarkable Frenchwomen,

MADAME DE SABLÉ

the part of her life which is richest in interest and results is that which is looked forward to by most of her sex with melancholy, as the period of decline. When between fifty and sixty, she had philosophers, wits, beauties, and saints clustering around her; and one naturally cares to know what was the elixir which gave her this enduring and general attraction. We think it was, in a great degree, that well-balanced development of mental powers which gave her a comprehension of varied intellectual processes, and a tolerance for varied forms of character, which is still rarer in women than in men. Here was one point of distinction between her and Madame de Longueville; and an amusing passage which Sainte-Beuve has disinterred from the writings of the Abbé St. Pierre so well serves to indicate, by contrast, what we regard as the great charm of Madame de Sablé's mind that we shall not be wandering from our subject in quoting it.

"I one day asked M. Nicole what was the character of Madame de Longueville's intellect; he told me it was very subtle and delicate in the penetration of character, but very small, very feeble, and that her comprehension was extremely narrow in matters of science and reasoning, and on all speculations that did not concern matters of sentiment. For example, he added, I one day said to her that I could wager and demonstrate that there were in Paris at least two inhabitants who had the same number of hairs, although I could not point out who these two men were. She told me I could never be sure of it until I had counted the hairs of these two men. Here is my demonstration, I said: I take it for granted that

WOMAN IN FRANCE

the head which is most amply supplied with hairs has not more than 200,000, and the head which is least so has but one hair. Now, if you suppose that 200,000 heads have each a different number of hairs, it necessarily follows that they have each one of the numbers of hairs which form the series from one to 200,000; for if it were supposed that there were two among these 200,000 who had the same number of hairs, I should have gained my wager. Supposing, then, that these 200,000 inhabitants have all a different number of hairs, if I add a single inhabitant who has hairs, and who has not more than 200,000, it necessarily follows that this number of hairs, whatever it may be, will be contained in the series from one to 200,000, and consequently will be equal to the number of hairs on one of the previous 200,000 inhabitants. Now as, instead of one inhabitant more than 200,000, there are nearly 800,000 inhabitants in Paris, you see clearly that there must be many heads which have an equal number of hairs, though I have not counted them. Still Madame de Longueville could never comprehend that this equality of hairs could be demonstrated, and always maintained that the only way of proving it was to count them."

Surely, the most ardent admirer of feminine shallowness must have felt some irritation when he found himself arrested by this dead wall of stupidity, and have turned with relief to the larger intelligence of Madame de Sablé, who was not the less graceful, delicate, and feminine because she could follow a train of reasoning, or interest herself in a question of science. In this com-

MADAME DE SABLÉ

bination consisted her pre-eminent charm : she was not a genius, not a heroine, but a woman whom men could more than love ; whom they could make their friend, confidante, and counsellor, — the sharer, not of their joys and sorrows only, but of their ideas and aims.

Such was Madame de Sablé, whose name is, perhaps, new to some of our readers, so far does it lie from the surface of literature and history. We have seen, too, that she was only one amongst a crowd — one in a firmament of feminine stars which, when once the biographical telescope is turned upon them, appear scarcely less remarkable and interesting. Now if the reader recollects what was the position and average intellectual character of women in the high society of England during the reigns of James the First and the two Charleses, — the period through which Madame de Sablé's career extends, — we think he will admit our position as to the early superiority of womanly development in France. And this fact, with its causes, has not merely an historical interest : it has an important bearing on the culture of women in the present day. Women become superior in France by being admitted to a common fund of ideas, to common objects of interest with men ; and this must ever be the essential condition at once of true womanly culture and of true social well-being. We have no faith in feminine conversazioni, where ladies are eloquent on Apollo and Mars ; though we sympathize with the yearning activity of faculties which, deprived of their proper material, waste themselves in weaving fabrics out of cobwebs. Let the whole field of reality be laid open to woman as well as to man, and then that which is

WOMAN IN FRANCE

peculiar in her mental modification, instead of being, as it is now, a source of discord and repulsion between the sexes, will be found to be a necessary complement to the truth and beauty of life. Then we shall have that marriage of minds which alone can blend all the hues of thought and feeling in one lovely rainbow of promise for the harvest of human happiness.

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

IT is a subject of general complaint among the literary men of Germany, that since 1848 they have no reviews or literary journals by which new books may be made known to the public; and foreigners are constantly wondering by what machinery the multitudinous works which issue from the German press can be made to obtain a remunerative circulation. With regard to some books, however, the censorship supplies this want. It may be considered as a governmental puffing institution, by which insignificant books are made notorious and an apathetic public is roused into curiosity. In the case of works by celebrated authors — Heine's "*Vermischte Schriften*," for example — the censorship is indeed sometimes too tardy in its action to have any appreciable effect as an advertising medium; an eager public has already bought and read the book before the prohibition comes. But the productions of less famous writers often acquire by means of the censorship an interest which they could not possess in any other character than that of forbidden fruit. Nay, the feeblest of feeble epigrams by which an English periodical attempts to satirize the habits of foreign royalty is made the subject of the newsman's winks and the reader's curiosity solely by means of this government aid.

Dr. Vehse's "*History of the German Courts since the Reformation*" — a work already extending to twenty-

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

eight volumes and not yet complete — has experienced peculiar benefits from the censorship; for several of the German governments have had the naïveté to prohibit the volumes relating to their own court, and at the same time to admit the volumes relating to other courts. *Ognuno ama la giustizia nella casa d'altrui*, says the Italian proverb; in other words, “We all think truth a good thing for our neighbours.” We have no doubt that this partial prohibition has contributed, not indeed mainly but considerably, to the powerful effect which Dr. Vehse’s work is said to have produced in Germany. Few works are sought for with greater avidity by non-literary readers — those readers who trouble themselves little with theories and are strongly acted on by facts; and among them its influence is said to be highly democratic. Yet it is by no means a *Tendenzschrift* — a work in which the materials are arranged with a view to a special inference. We understand that Dr. Vehse himself is no hot democrat, but a moderate liberal; and we must do him the justice to say that, so far as we are acquainted with his volumes, we trace in them no spirit of partisanship.

Besides the censorship, there are two other causes which we think will serve to explain the popularity of Dr. Vehse’s work. Germany has not, like France, been fertile in memoirs and biographies, which take the reader behind the scenes of history, and show majesty without its wig or aristocratic beauty with its rouge-pots, nor has it, like England, had ample access to documents which throw light on the secret transactions of kings and ministers. Again, Germany is singularly deficient

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

in that middle stratum of literature which consists of works at once solid and popular, and which is so rich with us. German works are generally written either for the learned or *für Damen* — the latter destination unhappily implying a very low standard — either for those who are devoting themselves to a certain line of study with the thoroughness of a professor, or for those who seek nothing higher in their reading than the diversion of an idle moment. Hence any work which addresses itself to intelligent men of the world, and which will instruct without demanding any great intellectual effort or previous acquirement, is doubly welcome to our German neighbours; and Dr. Vehse's work, with all the deductions which may be made on the score of execution, is one of this class. But readers who come to it with recollections of the piquancy of Saint-Simon or De Grammont, the quaint interest of Pepys, the gossiping charm of Walpole, or the panoramic picturesqueness of Macaulay, will find but slight gratification from its pages. Dr. Vehse pretends to no art in the presentation of his materials; he has chosen the plan of presenting the information he derives from written sources in the language of those sources themselves; and this mosaic of extracts, combined as it is with lists of ministerial, diplomatic, and court officials, necessarily gives his volumes all the artistic disadvantages of mere compilations. To those who object to his work that it wants the dignified and careful finish of history, he replies, in the words of Horace Walpole: "I am no historian: I draw characters, I preserve anecdotes, which my superiors the historians may enchain in their weighty

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

annals or pass over at their pleasure." Lovers of the anecdotic notoriously use rather a coarse sieve in the selection of their materials, and in this respect Dr. Vehse is no exception to the class among whom he ranges himself: moreover he has poured out the contents of his sieve somewhat carelessly upon his pages. We believe, however, that there are no deficiencies or inaccuracies in his work which can be referred to an uncandid bias, but simply such as arise from the more than ordinary fallibility which attaches to a writer who undertakes to present in a comparatively short period a survey of a vast historical field.

The eleven volumes relating to the Austrian court ¹ are forbidden at Vienna, and the author himself, since their publication commenced, has not been allowed to enter the Austrian dominions — a circumstance which he pleads as an apology for the absence from his work of information to be collected only in the archives of Vienna. This prohibition is not surprising. The monarchs of the House of Hapsburg, like the members of other dynasties, show to little advantage when daguerreo-typed instead of idealized; and perhaps there is no aristocracy whose antecedents present so much selfishness, venality, and unscrupulousness as that of Austria; no history which unfolds a more hideous course of misgovernment and persecution than that of the Imperial rule in Bohemia and Hungary. The dynastic interest of the House of Austria certainly served to knit together

¹ *Geschichte des österreichischen Hofes und Adels und der österreichischen Diplomatie.* Von Dr. Eduard Vehse. (*History of the Austrian Court and Aristocracy and of the Austrian Diplomacy.* By Dr. Edward Vehse.)

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

the forces of middle Europe so as to form a bulwark against Turkish invasion on the one hand and French domination on the other; but the details of its operation to this end are an almost unvaried tissue of the worst vices which belong to arbitrary government. Our present object, however, is not to dwell on these vices with any severe purpose, but simply to illustrate — through the medium of such records, anecdotes, and sketches of character and manners, as Dr. Vehse's work affords — the life and personnel of the Austrian court during the last three centuries.

The reign of Maximilian I, elected Emperor of Germany in 1493, forms a sort of border-land between the middle ages and the period of modern history. Maximilian himself belonged by his tastes and opinions to the past; he was *der letzte Ritter* — the last knight of chivalry; but under him the right of adjusting private quarrel by force of arms was abolished, hired soldiery superseded the military service of feudal retainers, and the Reformation began. In his day died the ironhanded Götz and Franz von Sickingen, and he lived to see Luther's ninety-five theses posted up on the church-door at Wittenberg. But Maximilian, in spite of his chivalrous ambition, had, like his ancestor Rudolf, the founder of his dynasty, an anti-chivalrous love of bargaining for possessions rather than fighting for them; and no Hapsburg carried out more diligently than he the sarcastic injunction: *Tu felix Austria, nube!* and his achievements of this kind prepared the way for that extensive empire which, under his grandson, Charles V, more than rivalled the possessions of Macedonia and Rome. His

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

own marriage with the heiress of Burgundy brought him the Netherlands, the marriage of his son Philip with Juana of Spain secured the inheritance of the then mighty Spanish Empire, and he paved the way by treaty for the possession of Bohemia and Hungary. Max is one of the most bizarre figures in history. Mythical stories, which we may accept as a sort of loud reverberation of the truth, represent him as a Hercules, who could bend iron as if it were hemp; who went into the cage of a lion, wrenched open its mouth, and tore out its tongue; and who (rather gratuitously, as it seems) went to the summit of the minster at Ulm, and, standing on a thin iron bar, raised one leg into the air. He would play at letting-off cannon against practised artillerymen; and was the best bowman, the best shot, the best huntsman of his time. As a specimen of his hunting exploits, we have the famous story of his adventure on the Martinswand in the Tyrol, where he was rescued from imminent death by a mountaineer, *alias* an angel, after a fast of two days and two nights. He aspired to be, like Charlemagne, the hero of an epos, dictated his own and his father's history under the title of "Der Weiss König," and gave the scheme for a poem called "Thenerdank," which recounted his own exploits. He seems to have busied himself with speculation, too, of a small kind. Two-and-twenty volumes written by him are still preserved in the Imperial Library at Vienna, and among their very miscellaneous contents are these questions, which he proposed to the Abbot Tritheim as serious difficulties: "Since Christianity comprehends only a small part of the earth, may not every man who

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

believes in God, without anything further, be saved in his religion? Why is revelation in so many passages obscure, contradictory, and why does it tell us so many things we do not care to know, and not what we should be very glad to know?" Of course Max, as a would-be knight-errant, was a great squire of dames: in his younger days he loved to dance with the wives of the Augsburg citizens, and there is a humorous story of his having smuggled into Ratisbon a body of women whom the magistracy had forbidden to enter during the Diet, by telling the foremost to take hold of his horse's tail, the second to take hold of her first neighbour's garment, and so on to the last, thus forming an electrical chain of Imperial protection. He was full of wise saws and repartees, and many a *bon mot* which old-fashioned jest-books attribute to the Duke of Marlborough or one of our own Georges, had Max for at least an earlier putative father. Some of these *mots* are epigrams on the nothingness of rank, yet no one had a stronger genealogical mania or adopted more sounding titles. He was determined, he said, to "outbrag Julius Cæsar, and at all events to have Charlemagne for his ancestor." To the arms of half a dozen European nations he added those of the Byzantine Empire, on the ground that "he or his successors would shortly conquer it." He was the "lord of all lands both of the east and of the west," the "king and heir of all Christendom and of several provinces." After the death of his second wife he took it into his head to aspire to the popedom, and spent large sums in bribing the cardinals with this view. Not that money was abundant with him, for the Im-

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

perial exchequer was low then as in later times, and one of his sobriquets was "Poco denari." Max was the first who formed an alliance with Russia, which had not hitherto been considered a European power, but had recently, under the Czar Ivan Basilowitch, thrown off the Asiatic yoke by the expulsion of the Tartars.

To the gay, eccentric Max succeeded his grave, stern grandson, Charles V. Of all great potentates who, according to the Persian compliment, have had "the sun for their hat," Charles is to us the least attractive. A hero with a sallow complexion and no teeth, a melancholy debauchee, in whom the demon of gout takes turn with the demon of asthma; a non-masticating gourmand, who in his dyspeptic after-dinner hours amuses himself with dwarfs and court fools; and a bigot withal, plagued with religious terrors, always sinning and always trembling — presents a most uncomfortable sample of Imperial majesty. Charles, however, had some of the elements of greatness — a deep penetration into men, an iron strength of will, and a proud directness, which made him despise flattery. He once said to the Venetian ambassador, Contarini, "It is my nature to persist obstinately in my opinions." "Sire," said the courtly Italian, "to persist in good opinions is firmness, not obstinacy." Charles replied, "*Qualche fiata io son fermo in le cattive* — sometimes I persist in bad ones." He had an eye for genius of all kinds; and not only, like every other great commander, chose his generals well, but could tell a nobleman to hold the ladder for Titian. One of his physicians was the great Vesalius, the father of modern anatomy, the first who dissected a *human* body; and

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

it is an interesting example of genius co-operating with genius, that Titian helped Vesalius in producing the illustrations to his great anatomical work.

There was no profuseness or splendour at Charles's court; he was even niggardly in his economy; his pages went about in threadbare garments, and he himself was seen, at a great military review, to take off his new velvet cap, that he might save it from the rain. He was a Spaniard by nature; and under him began that inoculation of German awkwardness with Spanish hauteur which characterized the manners of the Austrian court during two centuries. Among the stories more or less probable about Charles and his court, there is one which we are amused to see Dr. Vehse telling without a smile of scepticism. It reads like an Eastern apologue. Charles, says the story, ordered for the punishment of slanderers at his court, that they should creep on all fours and bark like a dog for a couple of hours every morning. This, however, lasted but a short time; for the ministers complained that for half the morning they could not have one rational idea, so loud and many-throated was the barking! Among the embassies sent by Charles to foreign countries was one to Russia, with the purpose of mediating between that empire and Poland. Herberstein, one of the chief functionaries engaged in this embassy, has left a minute account of all that took place — of the gracious demeanour of the Czar, who asked him if he had ever had his beard shaved off; and on hearing "yes," condescendingly observed that he too had undergone that operation on his second marriage. In the entertainment given to the embassy by the Rus-

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

sian nobles, the drinking seems to have been fast and furious, and the drinking of healths must have been especially formidable. "This drinking of healths," says Herberstein, "is performed with peculiar ceremony: he who proposes the health stands in the middle of the room, and says what he wishes for the prince or seigneur whose name he mentions — happiness, victory, and health, and that there may remain just so much blood in his enemies as he (the drinker) will leave in his goblet. This he says with his head uncovered, and as soon as he has drunk the wine to the bottom he throws the drinking-vessel on his head" (sets it on, we suppose, after the manner of a hat). The coarseness of this Russian hospitality is curiously in contrast with the sobriety and simplicity of the entertainment which Herberstein and his colleagues met with on their embassy to the Turks, when the whole party ate out of one dish at a time and moistened their lips with water.

In 1556, when Charles's brother Ferdinand I became emperor, nine-tenths of the people even in Austria were, according to the testimony of the Venetian ambassador, Protestant. The new doctrine had indeed a special attraction for the aristocracy in the spoils of church property which it threw in their way. At Wittenberg, the place of education for all the sons of the nobility, three young men of the Austrian aristocracy were successively rectors of the Lutheran university; the authority of the Pope was generally despised, and the two parties lived peacefully side by side until the foundation of the Society of Jesuits. Under these circumstances Ferdinand was by compulsion tolerant, though he was

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

a bigoted Catholic and had a Jesuit for his confessor. Under him the Jesuits quietly gained a footing in Vienna, at first residing humbly with the Dominicans and making themselves known chiefly as physicians while the plague was raging. His son and successor, Maximilian II, was tolerant by choice. He was a liberal-minded, strong-hearted man, who had little of the Hapsburg in him besides the gout, which seems to have been so inevitable an attribute of Imperial majesty in those days that courtiers could hardly have hit on a more delicate mode of flattery than swathing their limbs in flannel and hobbling.¹ During Maximilian's short reign Austria enjoyed the last good government it ever saw under the House of Hapsburg. His successors down to Maria Theresa were a compound in different proportions of the virtuoso and the bigot. In Rudolf II, the next emperor, the virtuoso predominated; and throughout his reign of thirty-six years he neglected all the business of government to shut himself up in his palace, the Hradschin at Prague, in company with his coins and pictures, his pet lions, leopards, and eagles, his mechanics, alchemists, and magicians. His letters, published in 1771, give evidence that he was acquainted with six languages, was versed in mathematical, mechanical, and physical science, and yet more in astrology, magic, and alchemy. The first important picture-gallery in Germany was collected by Rudolf; he spent immense sums

¹ A certain Eberhard von Raube, who married Max's natural daughter, may perhaps excite the envy of this beard-cultivating generation, when they are informed that his beard descended from his chin to the earth, and from thence was turned up again to his girdle.

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

on antiquities of all kinds, especially gems, coins, cameos, and medallions; and the unique cabinet of coins and polished stones, at Vienna, is formed chiefly from his collections. Amongst the treasures which he purchased at an immense price were the splendid Greek sarcophagus sculptured with the battle of the Amazons, and the great onyx cup with the apotheosis of Augustus. This cup had been brought from the East by the Knights of Saint John, during the crusades, and owed its preservation in the convent of Poissy, near Paris, to the belief that it bore a representation of the crucifixion! Rudolf's "Treasure-chamber" at Prague was celebrated far and wide; but, sad to say, its contents were scattered in the enlightened eighteenth century, under Joseph II. The statues were sold; a torso found no purchaser, and was thrown into the garden, where an oculist of Vienna picked it up, and bought it for a trifle, and at the Congress of Vienna, Louis, the Crown Prince of Bavaria, obtained it for a thousand ducats — it is the Ilioneus in the Glyptothek, at Munich. The old coins were sold by weight; and in an inventory made before the sale, a Leda of Titian figured as "A naked Woman bitten by a mad Goose." Rudolf's court was a resort for all the thaumaturgi and necromancers of Europe; and among the rest we find two Englishmen, John Dee and Edward Kelley. John Dee drove the black art with such success that he could boast of always seeing his genius, when he left his desk, obligingly sit down in his place and carry on his studies; when he returned, he had only to tap his genius on the shoulder, and it stood up. Edward Kelley paid dearly for the honour

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

which Rudolf bestowed on him in making him a *Freiherr* (Baron) of Bohemia; for, finding that he could not or would not make gold, Rudolf imprisoned him in a Bohemian castle, where he lay for six years. Queen Elizabeth applied for his release in vain; and at last, in an attempt to escape by a rope, the unfortunate alchemist broke his leg, and died in consequence of the fall. To Prague came also the "Illustrissimus" Marco Bragadino, with his two bulldogs, supposed to be familiar spirits. He was honoured as a second Paracelsus, especially as he seemed to esteem gold no more than brass or quicksilver, made great presents, and kept open table. The "Illustrissimus," however, died on the gallows. While Rudolf was throwing away money on these charlatans, he was paying, and sometimes omitting to pay, the meagre salary of 1500 guilders (about £150), to Kepler, who was installed at Prague as "Imperial Mathematician." Shutting himself up from any personal participation in affairs, the Emperor necessarily wanted informers and news-carriers, who were most conveniently to be found among his personal attendants; and he thus began the practice, which has characterized the Austrian monarchs, of being distrustful and monosyllabic to their ministers and aristocracy, and confidential to scribes and lackeys. Rudolf remained unmarried, deterred by the horoscope drawn for him by Tycho Brahe, which declared that "danger threatened him from his nearest relative — his own son." He does not seem to have apprehended that any one of his numerous illegitimate children could be implied under this prediction. The terror of assassin-

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

ation naturally grew with advancing years and feebleness, and was exaggerated by the appearance of Halley's comet in 1607, which seemed palpably to portend his fall. At length his dread reached such a pitch that his walks were taken only in long passages, into which the air was admitted by oblique apertures. These passages led to his stables, a favourite resort of his; and those who had to ask a favour of him frequently disguised themselves as grooms in order to obtain an interview. Such was the Emperor whom his servants called the second Solomon!

Matthias, in whose favour Rudolf was deposed, was a lover of pleasures, and his court was gay with festivals and spectacles. The taste which presided over them may be inferred from the description of a procession in honour of his wedding, in which Greek gods and symbols are oddly mingled with such mediæval apparitions as a crocodile made of linen and paint, moved by a man placed inside, and surmounted by a "*vornehme Person*." Weddings and christenings, among the aristocracy of those days, seem to have been on a colossal scale. It is characteristic that in a contemporary description of a wedding, where 294 guests were invited and 141 assembled, it is mentioned as a remarkable fact that "neither curses nor unseemly speech was heard from any one, nor was there any excessive drinking." This high degree of moderation, however, was not rewarded by a happy termination of the festivity, for the floor fell in, and the gay ladies and gallant gentlemen had to be extricated from dust, beams, and mortar. As they were Protestants, the Catholics regarded this

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

catastrophe as a manifestation of divine wrath — a theory of Providence which the Protestants were equally ready to apply upon occasion. Before the reign of Matthias closed, the first scene in the terrible tragedy of the Thirty Years' War was acted. Two Catholic noblemen, the representatives of the Emperor at Prague, were hurled out at window by the deputies of the exasperated Protestants, who had been forbidden to continue the building of their churches. This was the famous *Defenestratio Pragensis* of 1618. On the twentieth of March in the next year, the insignificant Matthias died; an event which was regarded as a marvellous fulfilment of Kepler's prophecy, with the seven M's for the year 1618: — Magnus Monarcha Mundi Medio Mense Martii Morietur. Such is the tribute which great men must pay to the spirit of their age!

"Better a wilderness than a land full of heretics" was the favourite saying of Ferdinand II, who had early made a vow to our Lady of Loretto and the Pope that he would restore the Catholic religion. The aspect of the court must have been anything but lively in his day, with an emperor at the head of it whose most important occupation was hearing masses, and assisting, with bare head and taper in hand, at religious pilgrimages. He introduced the procession to Herrnals, which took place in the middle of Lent and was intended to obliterate the memory of the time when Herrnals was a nest of Protestantism, and the people streamed thither from Vienna to hear the evangelical pastor preach from the castle-window. The procession was a sort of sacred masquer-

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

ade, in which Herod, Pilate, Joseph, and Mary, and the whole personnel of the New Testament history were represented as riding on asses. The road was lined with people, also in masquerade, who scourged themselves, wore black tables of sins on their breasts, or dragged heavy chains and crosses. This is the comic side of Ferdinand's achievements *in majorem gloriam Dei*; the tragic side is the devastation of his dominions by the longest of religious wars. His son, Ferdinand III, inherited his spirit, and further distinguished himself by his zeal for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, though he had not, like us, had the edification of seeing it established on papal authority.

The Peace of Westphalia, which terminated the Thirty Years' War, left the Emperor in an entirely new relation to his aristocracy. Great numbers of the old hereditary nobles in Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary had been proscribed on account of their Protestantism; and their places had been, to a great extent, taken by military adventurers and parvenus — Scotsmen, Spaniards, Walloons, and Italians — who had risen to prominence in the war. Many of the old nobility, indeed, did not hesitate to declare themselves converts to Catholicism for the sake of retaining their fortunes or winning advancement; but their position was thenceforth necessarily one of obligation to the court. Thus the chain of aristocratic families, which had once been able to defy the Emperor, was broken. From this time the list of Austrian nobility is variegated with Scotch, Spanish, Flemish, and Italian names — a means of amalgamation which is, probably, less objectionable in its result than

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

in its origin. It is a striking fact in the history of Austria that the German race has never furnished her most distinguished statesmen and generals. As diplomatists and statesmen Slavonians predominate; and among them are, perhaps, the two greatest — Lobkowitz and Kaunitz. Of her generals, Tilly was a Walloon, Wallenstein a Bohemian, Eugene and Montecuculi Italians, and Loudon of Scotch extraction.

Leopold I, who succeeded Ferdinand III in 1657, and reigned nearly half a century, had bigotry enough to merit the epithet "Great" from the Jesuits; but this dark background was relieved by a gay embroidery of virtuosism, love of sports, and splendour. The Maréchal de Grammont has left an amusing description of Leopold when he was eighteen, and as yet only King of Hungary. One of the attributes of his youthful majesty was a large mouth, which he kept constantly open. Playing one day at nine-pins with his favourite, Prince Portia, he complained that the rain fell into his mouth. The Prince, after due reflection on the difficulty, suggested that His Majesty should shut his royal mouth. "Which the King of Hungary did, and found himself much benefited thereby." Besides nine-pins his amusements were a sad and silent game with four cards, played after dinner with the Archduke his uncle, and music, in which he was already so great a proficient that he could compose very wretched melodies with the utmost correctness. Twenty years later this engaging youth had matured into a little man, still lax as to his mouth, of mumbling speech and weak legs, crushed beneath a huge perruque, and dressed, after the Spanish

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

fashion, with red shoes and stockings. In devotion he was not behind even Ferdinand II; he heard three masses a day, and was persuaded that he was under a special supernatural guidance. This guidance the priests called his "miracle"; so did his enemies, but they meant by it the miraculous luck of the House of Austria. "Poor Leopold I am not afraid of," said Louis XIV, "but I am afraid of his miracle." When the Turks, after the capture of Belgrade, in 1688, wished for peace, Leopold would not accept the proposal, although a new war with France was impending. "One must know the Emperor as well as I do," said Max Emanuel of Bavaria to Villars, "to believe what are the reasons which deter him. Monks have prophesied to him that the Empress will have twins, and that contemporaneously with this the Turkish Empire will fall, and one of the twins will sit on the throne of Constantinople. When Belgrade was taken, the Empress actually became pregnant; and now Leopold firmly believes that the rest of the prophecy will be fulfilled; and at no price will he hear of peace." This "Leopoldus Magnus" limited his activity in state affairs to signing the papers presented to him by his ministers, writing confidential letters to his brothers and cousins on the thrones of Europe, and giving audiences. These avocations were carefully recorded by Leopold himself in his calendar, together with his losses at cards; and posterity has thus the advantage of knowing that, in the year when the Turks besieged Vienna and drove Leopold out of his capital, he signed 8256 documents, and lost 965 ducats at cards. Leopold's apathy was never interrupted except

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

when, as in the Hungarian insurrections, self-preservation and bigotry impelled him to the violent suppression of heresy and rebellion. Then, as he said, "he tapped his fingers and heads flew off." With these exceptions, he left the management of affairs to his ministers, and to the intrigues of the Jesuits and the Camarilla.

Leopold's great passion was music. He played on several instruments, and often conducted the orchestra from his box at the opera. "Pity your Majesty was not a professor of music!" said his *Kapellmeister* one day, in a naïve burst of admiration. The Pasquin of Vienna, in grimmer mood, posted up on the palace gates — "Leopold, sis Cæsar et non musicus, sis Cæsar et non Jesuita!" The world, however, is really indebted to the musical taste hereditary in the House of Hapsburg; the Imperial Kapelle at Vienna, always kept up on a high scale of magnificence, has been a nursery for the highest music, and has furnished a *point d'appui* for the genius of such men as Caldara, Gluck, Mozart, and Beethoven. The Ferdinands had only patronized church music, but Leopold was an enthusiastic admirer of the opera; and under him representations were got up in a lavish style. His third wife (the Austrian Emperors were eminently anti-Whistonian), more unmitigatedly devout than himself, accompanied him in his constant visits to the opera with sighs, and read psalms and prayers instead of the opera text. Another passion of Leopold's was hunting — memorable as having given rise to the *tobacco monopoly* which has played a great part in Austrian affairs. Leopold, who was always in

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

embarrassment for money, had not enough to carry on his hunting in the country above the Erms, and Count Khevenhüller offered to supply what was necessary, if a monopoly of the importation of tobacco were granted him for twelve years. He received it!

The dreary stiffness and tedious minuteness of Austrian etiquette seem to have been constantly on the increase. De Grammont gives a curious sample of punctiliousness which occurred when Leopold, as King of Hungary, was holding his court at Frankfort. All the Electors came to visit the King, and this was his manner of receiving them: he waited for them at the head of the stairs, and when he saw them below, he descended three steps. When the Elector Moritz paid his visit, he observed that the King had only descended two steps, and remained standing at the bottom of the stairs until Leopold had been told that he had yet another step to descend. The Emperor's toilet — the inducing of the small head and thin legs in the large perruque and red stockings — was performed in the presence of two chamberlains "of the gold key," and two "of the black key." The chamberlains of the black key were the real attendants; they of the golden key assisted with their presence only; and of such officials there were no less than 600 in Leopold's time, the office of course being, in the majority of cases, purely honorary, as that of Hofrath is now. The Emperor dined at eleven, generally alone, for none but princes of the empire were eligible to sit down with him. The papal nuncio and ambassadors attended to see him take his first draught, and then withdrew. When he drove out, he was attended by

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

three hundred guards, horse and foot, and more than twenty carriages. The noblemen and gentlemen of his court accompanied him *on foot* through the town, unless it rained, when they were allowed to go on horseback. Once out of the town, they got into the empty carriages, one half preceding and the other half following the Emperor. All this, says the Abbé Pauchelli, a traveller of that day, diffuses about the person of the Emperor "*veramente una venerabile maestà.*" That all this stiffness of etiquette was after Leopold's own heart, and that there was very little genial human blood in his veins, is proved by his conduct on a memorable occasion. There are few more thrilling moments in history than the early morning of the twelfth of September, 1683, when Vienna lay half in ruins under the bombardment of the Turks. The only hope of its deliverance rested on John Sobiesky, King of Poland, who had joined his forces to the Austrians under the Duke of Lorraine, and had posted himself on the neighbouring heights. The evening before a note from Starhemberg, who commanded in Vienna, and a shower of rockets from the tower of Saint Stephen's, had given the signal that "no time was to be lost"; and the answering rockets and cannon from John Sobiesky had thrown the Viennese into an ecstasy of joy. With the first rays of the sun the troops poured down from the heights, and the city which had so long been the outwork of Christendom was saved. The Turks fled in such haste and dismay that their tents with all their immense stores were taken into quiet possession by the Poles and Austrians. It is said that the immense provision of coffee found in these tents created

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

the prevalent taste for coffee in Vienna; and the first licence to keep a coffee-house was given in this very year to a Pole named Koffschützky, who, as messenger to the Duke of Lorraine, had rendered important services to the city. No sooner had it been known that the Turks were approaching Vienna than Leopold had fled in terror with his family. That he returned in peace and safety he owed to John Sobiesky; yet when he was about to meet the deliverer of his capital, his grand preoccupation was, how he should compliment the King of Poland without compromising his Imperial dignity. "How shall I receive him?" he said to the Duke of Lorraine. "How else, your Majesty, than with open arms? for he has saved the empire." At last it was decided that they were to meet on horseback: and Leopold behaved with the most repulsive coldness. Sobiesky, indignant, wrote to his wife: "Any one would think now that we had the plague, and people were afraid to come near us; while before the battle my tents which, thank God, are tolerably roomy, could scarcely hold the multitude of comers. . . . Every one is disheartened, and wishes we had never helped the Emperor; so that this proud race might have been overthrown, never to rise again."

Leopold's belief in divine protection and guidance did not prevent him from dabbling in alchemy. He more than once threw away his gold on adventurers who held out to him the hope that they could make ducats indefinitely. A certain Conte Ruggiero, whose full title was a mosaic of three languages, — Don Dominico Manuel Caëtano, Comte de Ruggiero, Neapolitano,

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

Kurbairischer Feldmarschall und Statsrath, — had a salary of fifteen thousand gulden *en attendant* the preparation of a certain tincture which was to do the work of Midas's fingers. But before the tincture was prepared, Leopold died. Nor did his devoutness exclude the love of pomp and gaiety; the earlier years of his reign, at least, were crowded with festivities and amusements. The year in which Leopold married his first wife, the Spanish Princess, was distinguished by an oddly variegated series of entertainments. One day arrive from Augsburg the wonderful presents in silver — mirrors, candlesticks, caskets, vases, etc., which Gräfseslie (one of the murderers of Wallenstein) is to carry to the Sultan. Another day, a Jew is baptized, and the Emperor stands as godfather. Sledging was a favourite recreation, the gentlemen and ladies wearing fancy dresses. But the crowning exhibition in honour of the marriage was a *Roos-habet*, or spectacle of horsemen. A gigantic wooden building was erected before the palace for the performance, in which the Emperor took part. It was preceded by a prologue representing a contest between the elements, as to which of them had the greater claim to the production of the pearl (Margarita, the name of the Empress).

The elements were represented by four companies of riders, amounting to one thousand men. The Knights of Water were dressed in blue and silver, decked with fish-scales and mussel-shells. Behind them came, on a huge carriage, a whale carrying Neptune on his back, surrounded with sea-monsters and Tritons carrying fireworks, and with a chorus of thirty representing the

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

Winds. The Knights of Earth were clad in green and silver; behind them came, on a huge carriage, two great elephants bearing a tower on their backs, on which the Earth rested. The carriage represented a garden, and in it sat the god Pan, with his shepherds bearing burning clubs, and with a chorus representing the wonders of the earth. The Knights of Air were attired in pink and gold, adorned with rainbows. On the carriage behind them came the Air sitting on a terrible dragon, accompanied by harpies in gold, who carried a fire before them, and by a chorus of all sorts of birds. Above the carriage was a rainbow, and on it sat a singer who celebrated the praises of the Empress. Last came the Knights of Fire, in red and silver, armed with silver hammers, and leading a machine on which there was a monstrous bonfire, containing an unconsumed salamander, with elaborate fireworks playing from its jaws. Behind followed the carriage of Etna, vomiting flame, and on it sat Vulcan attired in flesh-colour and black, and carrying a silver hammer. He was attended by thirty one-eyed giants with silver hammers, and a chorus of Cupids. After a little preliminary interchange of abuse between the squadrons, the combat was announced by the sound of drums and trumpets; the wooden theatre, which had previously represented the Ehrenberg, assumed the form of a ship, and the Argonauts were seen sitting as judges, with a golden fleece and an Imperial crown. When the squadrons had fallen on each other with a terrific clang, a cloud began to spread itself over the heavens; and while they were gazing upwards in amazement, the cloud parted, and disclosed a starry globe with

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

Eternity seated on a rainbow. Eternity forbids the cavaliers to fight for the golden fleece and the Imperial crown, since they have been destined from the beginning for the House of Austria. The globe opens, and shows the Temple of the Elements, with the fifteen genii of the deceased emperors on horseback. The genii approach the temple, followed by the chariot of Glory in the form of a silver mussel-shell. The chariot contains a great pearl, with the likeness of the Empress in it, and the genius of the Emperor Leopold as the sixteenth of the House of Austria. Three other chariots follow, with Indians, Moors, and Tartars, as prisoners (no Turks). The globe at length disappears, and the *Roos-habet* begins.

The inventor of this prologue was rewarded with a present of twenty thousand gulden (£2000), and a pension of one thousand gulden; and was moreover elevated to the rank of *Freiherr* (Baron). The *Roos-habet* itself, in which the Emperor appeared, consisted of a procession of cavaliers glittering in gold and jewels, with a triumphal chariot drawn by eight white horses, and carrying a company of singers; the chariot paused on arriving beneath the window where the Empress was watching the spectacle; and the singers gave forth their music. After this, the journal which gives the description intimates that the exhibition came to an abrupt ending, by the prudently vague statement that "the parties of cavaliers rode amongst each other." Apparently, Imperial Majesty had not been able to keep its seat on a horse more excited by the music than subdued to the consciousness of its Imperial burthen. On future

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

occasions, when the *Roos-habet* was repeated, the Emperor contented himself with being a spectator.

The most remarkable man among Leopold's ministers was Lobkowitz, who held high posts for more than thirty years, and for a long time had almost unbounded influence over the Emperor. In many points Lobkowitz resembled his great successor, Kaunitz: he loved luxury and splendour, was full of caustic repartee, and had a strong liking for France and French fashions. He was inwardly opposed to the league with the maritime powers against France, which formed the policy of Leopold's reign; and this probably was the real cause of his fall. To the Jesuits, in spite of their formidable power, he was an open foe, and directed the arrows of his wit against them without fear or scruple. Leopold was completely in the grasp of the Jesuits, and could deny nothing. Lobkowitz, however, obviated several of his foolish gifts; for example, on one occasion, when the Emperor had made the Society a grant of the important Grafschaft of Glatz, the determined minister tore up the document, and when the Jesuits came to him to receive the parchment, he showed them a crucifix, and, pointing to the letters I. N. R. I., he interpreted them to mean, *Jam nihil reportabunt Jesuitae* — "This time the Jesuits will carry away nothing." Even in his will he prepared a final sting for them. After an apparently decent preamble, at the bottom of a page he bequeathed to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus 82,000 — here the leaf had to be turned over, and on the other side followed — "nails towards a new building." To the bitter enemies whom Lobkowitz thus made for himself

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

he had imprudently added a woman and an empress — Claudia of Tyrol, Leopold's second wife. Their united intrigues, together with his opposition to the French war, at length brought about his disgrace: he was suddenly deprived of all his employments, forbidden to ask the reason, and banished to his country-house, where he gratified his sarcastic humor by having a room furnished half with princely splendour, and half as a miserable hut; in the one half he commemorated his former elevation, in the other, on the walls of which he wrote satires and epigrams on his enemies, he indicated his utter fall.

The ablest military commander in the earlier part of Leopold's reign was Montecuculi, celebrated for his victories over the Turks and his "*Memorie della Guerra.*" Like Eugene, who near the close of the same reign commenced a similar and yet more brilliant career as generalissimo of the Imperial army against the French and the Turks, Montecuculi was a statesman, a philosopher, and a man of letters, as well as a great general. One of the next to him in command was Count Sporck, who was a type of the tribe of military adventurers and parvenus fostered by the Thirty Years' War — a mixture of the rudeness and ignorance of the common soldier, the instincts of an able commander, and the astuteness of a man of the world who can push his way to fortune, make money, and keep it. In the battle of Saint Gothard, when Montecuculi commanded the last attack on the Turks, Sporck knelt down and prayed thus: "Almighty Generalissimo above, if Thou wilt not to-day help us, thy believing children, at least do not help the Turkish dogs, and it shall be the better for

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

thee!" In his last campaign against Turenne, this once hardy soldier had become so enfeebled that he wept when he gave the order to his cavalry to advance—not a very inspiring sight to subordinates! But then, as now, old men lay like the chills of a lingering winter on the youthful vigour of armies. When Sporck was on his death-bed, he ordered his chaplain to read to him some fine story of a hero. The chaplain chose the history of Samson. But when he came to the slaying of a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, the old soldier called out from his pillow, "Hold thy tongue, there, I know well enough what an honest man can do!"

Characteristic of the time in another way is the story of the Prince de Ligne, who in the last decade of Leopold's reign came as ambassador to Vienna. Of a highly distinguished Flemish family and possessed of immense wealth by marriage, the Prince created a great sensation in Vienna by the splendour of his establishment and the lavishness of his presents and entertainments. Among the Viennese gentlemen with whom he was most intimate was a Count Hallweil: both were fond of high play, and were collectors of coins and medals. One day the Prince invited Hallweil to hunt with him, and they drove out into the forest together, accompanied by a single servant, a Frenchman, the Prince having excused himself from taking the Count's servant also, on the ground that the carriage would not hold four. In the evening the Prince returned without the Count, and at a soirée, in answer to the inquiries of the latter's sister, said carelessly that on their way they had met with a servant in yellow livery with a carriage, and Hall-

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

weil had joined him, intending to go to Baden. Two days passed, and the Count did not appear; articles forwarded for him to Baden did not reach him, and he was nowhere to be heard of. His relatives began to have suspicions. They knew that a short time before the Prince had lost fifty thousand gulden to Hallweil, and that, not being able to pay immediately, he had given a bill for the amount, at the same time begging the Count not to mention the debt, lest it should be supposed that he (the Prince) was in want of money. Notwithstanding his promise of silence, Hallweil had publicly spoken of the debt, and the Prince was aware of it. One evening soon after, on his sitting down to cards with a lady, she said to him, "But if your Excellency loses, will you pay me?" "Madam," he replied, "it is true I am in debt to Hallweil, but he shall certainly be paid." In answer to the pressing demands of the Count's relatives the Prince continued to reply that he was not bound to say what had become of him after they had separated. At length they applied to the Emperor, the forest was searched with dogs, and the Count's body, with four wounds in it, two from a pistol and two from a dagger, was found under a heap of stones in a marshy place. It was brought to Vienna and publicly exhibited in the Count's hôtel, in the hope of raising a popular tumult against the ambassador, whom the law of nations protected from Austrian justice. After demanding in vain an audience of the Emperor and the ministers, the Prince presented himself unannounced to Count Kinsky, and begged to lay down his function, that he might fight his slanderers. "In that case," said

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

Kinsky, "you must fight every old woman, for the affair is the talk of the whole country." The people had laid wait to attack him as he returned to his palace, but he eluded them, and managed to escape from Vienna in the dress of a monk. In Portugal he had to undergo a trial for the murder, but was acquitted. He urged in his defence that the Count had played falsely, and therefore he was no longer bound to treat him as a gentleman — even if he had been guilty of the deed. On his acquittal he appeared again at court, and subsequently pursued his study of coins and medals at Venice, where he died in 1710. At Vienna there remained a tradition that jealousy had been the motive of the murder.

The iniquitous war of the Spanish Succession, inaugurated on the side of France by the lowest treachery and tampering with wills, and on the side of Austria by the poisoning of a queen and a boy prince, occupied the last years of Leopold's reign, and was carried on with vigour under his successor, Joseph I. It opened a field for the genius of Marlborough and Eugene, and enabled them to present the unfrequent spectacle of two men great enough to be friends in circumstances which would have made meaner natures rivals. In its general bearing the war was momentous to Europe, but its immediate object is best characterized by the words of the adventurous Peterborough, who had a brilliant share in it, to his opponent, Vendôme. Vendôme wore the likeness of Philip V, the French claimant of the Spanish throne, set in diamonds, on his breast, and Peterborough that of Charles VI, the Austrian claimant, in a ring. "Are we not a couple of good-natured old donkeys," said

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

Peterborough, "to knock ourselves about for these two simpletons? In either case Spain gets a sorry king!" Joseph I, who lived only six years after his accession, was not without sense and spirit. He had been brought up by men who were no friends to the Jesuits, and he was the first emperor, since the institution of the Order, who had not a Jesuit for his confessor. This was by no means satisfactory to the fathers of the Society; they accused the confessor to the Pope of being more devoted to the Emperor than to the Vatican, and he was cited to appear at Rome. Hereupon Joseph declared that if his confessor must go to Rome, he should not go without plentiful companionship, for all the Jesuits in the Austrian dominions should go with him! The Pope gave way to this energetic threat.

Charles VI had spent eight years of his youth in Spain, and had come back with a double incrustation of Spanish hauteur overlaying his Austrian phlegm. When he visited England on his way to Spain he was shocked and annoyed at the unceremonious manners of the English, who, not at all awed by this avatar of Imperial majesty, came close to his carriage to offer their greetings and shout their cheers. It seems indeed that he had the smallest possible liking for our country and ways, for notwithstanding the cordial reception given him by Queen Anne, and the rows of young ladies who stood like a grove of dahlias and hollyhocks lining the way to his apartment, he hurried away from Windsor the next day, and though a storm drove his ship back into Torbay, the pressing invitations of the Queen and nobility could not induce him to set his foot on

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

English ground again. In person and in taste Charles was very nearly a reproduction of his father, Leopold I; he inherited the thin legs, the hanging lip, the confused utterance, and the love for hunting and music. The bigotry in him was of rather a milder cast, owing perhaps to his travels and his intercourse with Englishmen and Hollanders; but all the hatred he economized on heretics he gave to the French. The Spanish dress, with the red stockings and shoes *obligato*, was still the mode at court, and if any one appeared there in *white* silk stockings, Charles pointed him out to the general disgust as a "cursed Frenchman." One French fashion, however, the perruque, was oddly blended with the severity of the garments which we admire in the portraits of Velasquez, but the privilege of appearing in this incongruous adjunct was confined to the Emperor when the court was at Vienna, and was only allowed to the nobility at the country palaces. The Prater, which had hitherto been a hunting-forest, was altered after the pattern of the Prado at Madrid, and was reserved for the slow and solemn promenades of the Emperor and his court. The members of the Imperial family were saluted with three reverences in the Spanish fashion, which included the bending of the knee, and the Emperor and Empress dined alone under a canopy on a dais, like the ideal kings and queens of a child's fairy-tale. Some relaxation of etiquette was allowed at supper in the apartments of the Empress, but even then no minister could sit at table with her unless he were a cardinal. All the movements of the court were ordered according to an inexorable rule. Each month had its

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

regular gala-days, in which courtiers were admitted to the honour of kissing hands and seeing their majesties dine; its Golden Fleece days, when all the knights of the Order appeared in their robes at mass and vespers; and last, not least, its Devotion-days, which were a terrible *corvée* to the foreign ambassadors who happened to be of a mercurial temperament. The gay Duc de Richelieu relieved himself, after the endurances of a Lent at the Viennese court, by a piteous complaint to Cardinal Polignac. "*Il n'y a qu'un Capucin avec la santé la plus robuste qui puisse résister à cette vie pendant le carême. Pour en donner une idée à Votre Éminence j'ai été de compte fait depuis le dimanche des rameaux jusqu'au mercredi d'après Pâques, cent heures à l'église avec l'Empereur.*" His Eminence replied, "Imaginez-vous précisément la même chose d'un cardinal à Rome. *Il est vrai que nous sommes payés pour cela.*"

The number of persons attached to the court by some titular dignity or pension under Charles VI is said to have been not less than forty thousand; and of these, two thousand were salaried and active officials. How, it is natural to ask, was this host of attendants lodged? They were quartered on the householders of Vienna, who were expected, for a slight compensation, to reserve the second storey of their dwellings for the reception of persons attached to the court. At first it seems astounding that this burthen could be quietly submitted to, but the patience of the Viennese under it is partly explained by the fact that it opened an avenue to a little interest at court. It was abolished by Joseph II, who commuted

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

the furnishing of house-room into a small yearly payment. The traditional idea that it was beneath the Imperial dignity to have any care for the finances gave the utmost licence to shameless prodigality and speculation in subordinates. The expenses of the court as well as the wars of the Empire were carried on only by means of advances on the revenue, and loans for which the Emperor was glad to pay eight per cent. Greedy nobles, officials, and Jews became rich at the expense of the Imperial exchequer, and while the magnificence of the Austrian aristocracy was the amazement of travellers, the service on the Emperor's table was old and shabby. Half Vienna lived, and avowedly lived, out of the Imperial cellar and kitchen. Of course the accounts were of the usual imaginative kind : — the Empress required twelve cans of Hungarian wine for her sleeping-draught, and each of her ladies could not be supplied with less than six; two casks of Tokay were yearly required to soak the bread for the Empress's parrots, and the parsley for the court kitchen cost about four hundred pounds a year. The system of boundless almsgiving contributed not a little towards the financial confusion. Leopold had introduced the practice of giving regular audiences to beggars, in which he sometimes distributed packets containing fifty, one hundred, or two hundred ducats; and this mode of seeking the salvation of the Imperial soul at the expense of the commonwealth was continued to the end of Maria Theresa's reign. The court also bore the entire cost of the opera, which was conducted on a very lavish scale; a first representation rarely costing less than six thousand pounds. A new era was

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

then beginning for the Italian opera, into which Metastasio was breathing the tender, amorous spirit of his honeyed verse. The little Abbé, of *rococo* appearance, came to Vienna as court poet in 1729, invited by the Emperor's accomplished mistress, the "Spanish Althann," whom Metastasio at first worshipped as a "bright particular star," but was afterwards supposed to have privately married. Charles's passion for this mistress, — who more than divided his time and attentions with his lovely wife, Elizabeth of Brunswick, — so far from scandalizing the Jesuits, was encouraged by them, for reasons of their own; indeed, they found in it an edifying resemblance to the love of Jesus and the wounds of the Lamb.

The luxury of the aristocracy at this period — the taste and splendour of their furniture, and the profusion of their tables — astonished Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. It was especially the fashion to have a multiplicity of wines, and at dinner-parties a list of wines was placed under the cover of each guest. The witty Bussy, who had been sent on a temporary mission to Vienna, allowed himself the pleasure of a joke at the expense of this Viennese ostentation. He had an unusually long list of wines placed under the plates, and when one of the guests expressed his surprise that the ambassador could have laid in so various a stock of wines, Bussy requested him to read the superscription to the list. It was this: "Inventory of the wines which I have *not*." On the opposite side of the *carte* was a list of the few kinds which he could really offer his guests. Alchemy still continued to be a drain on the fortunes of

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

the great. Vienna swarmed with alchemists, and those who could afford it kept an alchemist in their establishment. How strong was the epidemic belief in occult powers may be judged from the fact that the Duc de Richelieu, *fort esprit* as he was, could be induced, with two of his Austrian companions, to appoint a midnight rendezvous with a charlatan who promised to give them what they most desired. That the expectation which led them out was a serious one seemed to have a terrible proof in the discovery, made the next morning, of the unfortunate charlatan weltering in his blood—a victim, as was supposed, of the young noblemen's vengeance on him for his imposture. The sybaritism of the higher ranks was mingled with no little ferocity, heightened probably by the abundant sprinkling amongst them of Spanish and Italian blood, and by the perpetual wars in which the Empire had been engaged. Duels, in spite of the severest edicts, in which both principals and seconds were threatened with death and confiscation of property, were very rife in Vienna, where a spot called the "Ochsengriessen" was the Austrian "Chalk Farm." Duels were then often fought on horseback, a custom of which we see a memorial in Wouverman's pictures; and not unfrequently the seconds, nay, the passers-by, mixed themselves in the combat, so that it became a kind of skirmish. Domestic morals, as might be expected, were not of a higher order than social morals: the rule for the higher classes was a *mariage de convenance*, tempered by *cicisbeism*. The first care of a woman after her marriage was to provide herself with a cavalier, as a necessary part of her establishment; and so completely

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

was this kind of double marriage recognized in Vienna that it was thought a mortal offence to a lady to invite her to dinner without inviting her lover as well as her husband. This second relation, however, like the first, seldom had love for its basis; it was entered into with the utmost deliberation, and among the articles of the contract was a pension to be paid to the lady if her lover should prove inconstant, an event which the said article might have some potency in preventing; at any rate it was of rare occurrence, and some of these *liaisons* lasted twenty years. We might wonder that many men were found willing to incur such an alternative, but it seems that a relation of this kind was one of the things "expected of them" by society, and without it a man was held to cut a poor figure. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu tells us that she knew several ladies in the highest society whose hypothetic pensions were talked of as confidently as their actual incomes. It may be imagined that with these calculating ladies, who moreover had daily to construct and support a head-dress about as large and heavy as a milk-pail, the coquetry and intrigue of French society were unknown: they sinned with solemnity.

Far above all other men at Charles's court, like an oak among brambles, was Prince Eugene, one of the seven generals whose genius Napoleon declared to be worth studying, a far-sighted and liberal-minded statesman, a student as well as a patron of art and science, and an ingenuous, unaffected, and warm-hearted man. The youngest of the five sons of Olympia Mancini, one of Mazarin's celebrated nieces, he was brought up at

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

the French court, but was looked on with little favour by Louis Quatorze, who made the great mistake of refusing him a military commission, which he had asked for as a substitute for ecclesiastical dignities. On his refusal, Eugene left France, declaring that he would not set foot there again but with sword in hand as an enemy, a threat which nine years later he fulfilled. Louis thus made the fatal blunder of unconsciously presenting his enemy Austria with the greatest general she ever possessed. Eugene was beloved by his soldiers, for whom he often provided out of his own purse, when, as it frequently happened, the administration at home had no money for them. In spite of Austrian obstructiveness he abolished in his army advancement by seniority. "Messieurs the civilians," he said, "may be as strict as they like in their regard to seniority in their council chambers; but in the end it will be seen, even there, that it leads to nothing but an increase of confusion. Seniority in service is the mother of jealousy, self-interest, and cabals. *As subtle and slow poison gradually destroys the body, so seniority undermines states and armies.* Nothing must be left untried to rid us of this incumbrance." When Eugene laid down the sword, he devoted himself with all the energy of his intense nature to the labours of statesmanship: he attempted to introduce reforms in administration and finance, to stimulate commerce, and to rouse the Emperor to a real interest in the condition of the people. Charles, however, never heartily liked his great general, and only endured the predominance which his achievements and character made inevitable. But unmindful of coldness and jealousies,

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

happy in his own activity, in his correspondence with men of science, his collections, and his buildings, as well as his political projects, he remained, to the good old age of seventy-three, according to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's comparison, "like Hercules at the Court of Omphale." For a quarter of a century he had scarcely ever failed, when in Vienna, to spend his evening at the Duchess of Holstein's, where he met his beloved friend the Countess Batthiany, or at the Countess's own house. His well-known horses, with their rose-coloured harness, might be seen in the last years of his life finding their way from his palace to the hôtel of the beautiful Countess, and standing still at the door, though for some time no one got down, for the aged servants were asleep outside the carriage, and their aged master asleep within.

With Charles VI the male line of the House of Hapsburg terminated, and his daughter Maria Theresa, by her marriage, introduced what is called the House of Lorraine. Under Maria Theresa the thick ice of Austrian etiquette began to thaw. Her proud and high spirit was tempered with a certain bourgeoisie good nature; the troubles which surrounded her on her accession compelled her to court popularity, and the predilections of her husband, added to the alliance with France which was ultimately brought about by Kaunitz, helped to introduce French fashions and the French language. Maria Theresa had been educated by her father with Spartan severity; coffee, that sweet *un-murderous* poison, was rigorously withheld; and, like the disciples of Pythagoras, she was commanded to abstain from beans, for which, however, she had an

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

unconquerable weakness. Even after she was married her waiting-woman could only smuggle the too tempting vegetable in a cap-box, in a prayerbook-case, or in the riding equipage of her husband. The rules for her intellectual education seem to have been chiefly of the negative kind, defining what she was *not* to know; her historical and geographical knowledge was such as could be gathered from a miserable Jesuitic compendium; and even in languages, a part of culture which is not dangerous to piety, she was so poorly taught that she spoke them all with the most comic Germanisms. But her mother-wit and strength of character secured for her a personal influence which no mere acquirements can obtain; perhaps, also, she owed some of her ascendancy to her beauty, which, as pictures and the less questionable testimony of eye-witnesses assure us, was imperial. It was a tall, luxuriant, Gothic beauty, with blue eyes, magnificent blond hair, and admirable hands and arms. Yet Podewils, in one of his dispatches, says of her that she took no care of her beauty, and exposed herself fearlessly in all weathers, walking many hours together in the heat of the sun or in the most biting cold. She was the most intrepid of horsewomen, and won the enthusiastic affection of her troops by showing herself among them continually, bestowing marked distinction on military merit, and giving liberal largesses. “*Elle cherche généralement,*” says the ambassador, “*à s’éloigner de son sexe et ambitionne des vertus qui lui sont moins propres et qui en font rarement l’appanage. Il semble qu’elle soit fâchée d’être née femme.*”

In one of her weaknesses she was at once masculine

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

and feminine — she had a man's jealousy of her power and a woman's jealousy of her husband; and by the one passion she created the evil which the other passion made her dread. She would allow her husband no share in the direction of affairs; she even checked him in the presence of her council for giving his opinion on business of which he knew nothing. He was thus reduced to be, as his son Joseph said, "an idle man surrounded by idlers," and his natural inclination to gallantry led him into flirtations with the fair ladies of the court. Francis was a handsome, fascinating, easy-tempered man, affectionate, temperate, free from bigotry, and a hater of constraint and etiquette. His education had been so neglected that he could barely read and write, but he had abundant sense, had travelled much in Germany, France, Italy, and England, and had a taste for art. His talent at calculation he turned to practical account, not only by conducting profitable speculations for himself, but by exposing many financial abuses in the state. Maria Theresa at once domineered over him and doated on him. Any of her ladies to whom he was observed to pay more than usual attention was removed; and she used all the devices of a woman and an empress to prevent him from having male associates who had a reputation for gallantry. The consequence was that *petits soupers* and excursions were arranged with the most cautious secrecy. After years of unavailing marital police, Maria Theresa resigned herself to her husband's habits, and on one occasion showed a complete triumph over her personal feeling. When, after the death of this

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

beloved husband, the Empress presented herself for the first time in the midst of her court, she found the crowd of ladies and gentlemen gathered on one side, while on the other, in deep mourning, bathed in tears and deserted by all, stood the Princess Auersperg, Francis's mistress. The Empress, not without a smile of contempt at the mean crowd who, but a few days before, had courted the woman they now shunned, went up to the Princess, took her hand, and said aloud, "We have indeed had a great loss, dear friend!" For fifteen years after her husband's death the Empress remained in the deepest mourning. She never again occupied the apartments where she had lived with Francis, but removed to the next storey, where all the rooms were hung with black. On the eighteenth of every month, and through the whole month of August in every year, she shut herself up from the world to mourn for her loss.

She was equally affectionate as a mother, and many letters of hers remain to attest the anxiety she felt about the education of her sixteen children. It is a curious instance of the perverting tendency of state policy that this tender mother used the utmost exertions to effect a marriage between one of her daughters and the coarse, brutal Ferdinand of Naples, of whose character she had the greatest horror. In a letter giving minute directions as to the discipline which she thinks will best prepare her daughter for this destiny, she says, "I regard the poor Josepha as a sacrifice to policy; provided that she does her duty towards God and her husband, and secures her salvation, even if she must be unhappy, I shall be contented." Josepha

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

was rescued from marriage by death, and her place was taken by Caroline — the Caroline who is associated with the darkest page in Nelson's history. Of her still more unhappily celebrated daughter, Marie Antoinette, there is a story which, if not true, is not ill-invented. When her marriage with the Dauphin was in contemplation, Maria Theresa went to visit a nun in a neighbouring convent who had the reputation of being able to look into the future. She expressed her anxiety for the good, pious child, who for the rest of her life was to be separated from her and live at a court so corrupt as that of Louis XV. The answer she received was: "She will have great reverses, and afterwards she will become pious again." It pierced the heart of the Empress to think that her daughter would cease to be pious, but the negotiations for the marriage were not broken off. Of another daughter, the Archduchess Elizabeth, who was never married, a charming *mot* is recorded. She had an abscess in her cheek, and when Sir Robert Keith, the English ambassador, paid her a visit of condolence, she laughed and said, "Croyez-moi, pour une archiduchesse de quarante ans, qui n'est pas mariée, un trou à la joue est un amusement."

The good-natured ease, liveliness, and beauty of Maria Theresa had a magical effect on her subjects at the commencement of her reign; and even later, when discontent at unfulfilled promises and unpopular measures created murmurs against her, her radiant presence was like a sudden sunbeam to them. For some time after her husband's death she had never

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

appeared in the theatre. One evening, as she was working in her cabinet, the news came that her first grandson was born; she rushed in her dishabille into the Palace theatre, and leaning over the front of her box, exclaimed, "Poldel (Leopold) has a boy, and it is just come as a present on my wedding-day — that is gallant!" Pit and boxes were electrified. Her most fatal weakness was bigotry. It led her into the wretched mistakes of pensioning converts to Catholicism, and forcing the children of Protestant parents into conventual education and Catholic marriages. It instigated the oppressive "transplantation" of Lutherans into Saxony, and the petty persecution of those who were still suffered to remain in her dominions. She was equally tyrannical in morals, and visited aberrations with a severity almost as inquisitorial as that of the English Puritans. Thinking it possible to "put down" vice by external measures, she instituted a Commission of Chastity — a kind of extra police, to watch over one department of morals.

In spite of her active and temperate habits, she became so corpulent as she advanced in life that all movement was difficult to her, and she was conveyed up and down stairs in a machine. When she heard mass, the floor of her bedroom was opened, and the service was performed in a chapel arranged in the room below. She repeatedly insisted on being let down by a chair and rope into her husband's grave. When, the last time, the rope broke, she said, "He wants to keep me: I shall soon come." A few days after she was taken ill. She had agreed with her physician that when her last moment was come, he

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

should intimate it to her by asking if she wished for lemonade. When the words were uttered, she struggled to rise, and said, "Open the window." "Whither does your Majesty wish to go?" said her son Joseph, gently holding her arm to support her. "To thee! I come!" were her last words.

Kaunitz, the soul and right hand of Maria Theresa's policy, was so highly valued by her that she tolerated the licence of his life, which he took no pains to conceal from her. He one day put a stop to an incipient lecture on this subject, by saying, "Madam, I came here to speak on your affairs, not mine." In his efforts towards an alliance with France he won her hearty co-operation; and this head of the Commission of Chastity, who never spoke of the Empress Catherine but as "*cette femme*," was induced by Kaunitz to write a letter to Madame de Pompadour, in which she addressed the all-powerful mistress of Louis XV as "*Madame, ma chère sœur et cousine*," — a "sacrifice to policy" which threw her husband Francis into convulsions of laughter. Kaunitz had more difficulty in winning over the Empress to his second great scheme, the expulsion of the Jesuits. To his arguments she had two replies: "The Jesuits are the bulwark of all authority," and — tears. At length the discovery that her confessions had been revealed by her Jesuit confessor, and other secrets of the Order which Kaunitz had become possessed of through an apostate, prevailed, and the edict for their expulsion was signed in 1772. These two wise measures of Kaunitz were more than counterbalanced by his co-operation in the partition of Poland, into which he was cajoled by the

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

flattery of Frederick the Great. It is honourable to the judgement of Maria Theresa that she saw at once the impolicy and the moral turpitude of this measure. On signing the deed for the partition, she recorded her disapprobation in these words: "*Placet*, because so many great and learned men desired it; but *when I have been long dead, it will be seen what are the consequences of this injury to all that has hitherto been held sacred and just.*" On a separate paper she wrote a further protest, in which she says, "In this matter, wherein not only public right is notoriously against us, but all justice and sound reason, I must confess that never in my life have I been so grieved or so ashamed to let myself be seen." Maria Theresa felt the value of Poland as a screen between her dominions and Russia, which she always dreaded as a neighbour; but Kaunitz, if he had ever shared her opinions, had had his perceptions deadened by the grateful incense of Frederick's flattery. Indeed, this acute diplomatist, who was all his life occupied in piercing the minds of other men, had a colossal vanity and self-valuation that made him appear quite naïve. "Heaven," he used to say, "requires a hundred years in order to produce a mind great enough to restore a monarchy. Then it rests a hundred years; this makes me fear for the Austrian monarchy after my death." The Prince de Ligne heard him say to a Russian who was presented to him: "I advise you, sir, to buy my portrait, for your countrymen will be glad to become acquainted with the person of a man who for fifteen years governed this monarchy as its greatest minister; who knows everything, understands everything, and *sits better on horse-*

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

back than any man of his time." His tastes and habits were all formed on the French model, much to the advantage of Austrian manners, for in spite of envious blame, his influence inevitably determined the reigning fashion. In one point he set an excellent example: like Eugene, he treated men of letters and artists with distinction, and placed them at his table among counts and princes. Gluck was an especial favourite with him; and the great composer often showed his broad, scarred, manly face in the minister's circle, where he must have looked very much like a rough shepherd's dog among the sleek pets of the drawing-room. It is true Kaunitz thought himself entitled to exact no slight deference from artists, as well as from the rest of the world. When the Archduke Leopold was about to be married at Innspruck, Kaunitz went there beforehand to see that all was in order for the festivities. The opera, above all things, was the object of his attention; and when Gluck assured him that everything was in perfect preparation, "Good," said Kaunitz, "let the opera be at once performed." "How!" exclaimed Gluck, "without an audience?" "Monsieur Gluck," answered the minister, "*sachez que la qualité vaut bien la quantité; je suis moi seul une audience.*" Kaunitz had three horrors — scents, fresh air, and death. Ladies piquing themselves perhaps on their *recherché* perfumes were chased from him with the terrible words, "*Allez-vous en, Madame, vous puez!*" His coach was hermetically closed, and his favourite exercise of horsemanship was taken under cover, except in the heat of summer. "The Prince is coming!" was the signal for closing the ever-open

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

windows of Maria Theresa's apartments, and Caroline Pichler says that he wore nine black silk mantles, in order to accommodate the layers of drapery to the temperature of the room. Yet, in defiance of hygiene, he lived to be eighty-four. The mention of "death" and "small-pox" was strictly forbidden in his presence, and his readers and friends had to tax their talent for periphrasis in order to avoid the offensive words. The death of his old friend Baron Binder was thus announced to him: "Baron Binder is no longer to be met with." Like Lobkowitz and Metternich, Kaunitz had always the *mot saillant* at command, and from the shelter of his position he darted his sarcasms with little consideration for others. Now and then, as will happen, he got a Roland for his Oliver. "So," he once said to Casanova, "Rubens was a diplomatist who amused himself with painting?" "No, your highness," said the caustic Italian, "he was a painter who amused himself with diplomacy."

One of the most graphic accounts of Maria Theresa's court is that of our countryman Wraxall. When the education of the Empress was so deficient, it is not surprising to learn from him that the culture of women generally in Vienna was extremely narrow. They received their education in convents, and their literature consisted chiefly of such sacred legends as those of Saint Theresa and Saint Catherine; a woman who had read Cervantes, Crébillon, and Le Sage was a prodigy. The morning was spent either in dishabille and idleness or in the labours of the toilette. To be sure, the morning was a short one, dinner being then, as now, the only thing towards which Germans seemed to hurry. Half-past one

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

was the dinner-hour, and it was *bon ton* to make calls about half-past two, when people were supposed to be rising from dinner. In a few of the principal houses, such as those of Kaunitz and Colloredo, the evening receptions were perfectly unconstrained; the guests amused themselves with play or conversation, at their pleasure. Cards were universal. Wraxall, less critical than Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who in the preceding reign thought the Austrian women endowed by Heaven with an exceptional share of ugliness, praises the persons of the Viennese ladies and the taste with which they wore their jewels. It is true, he says, that the most beautiful women in Vienna are not at all Austrian, but Italians, Bohemians, Hungarians, and Poles. Rouge was adopted by young and old, notwithstanding the better example of the archduchesses, to whom the Empress strictly forbade it. After the death of Francis, rouge was prohibited, on pain of the Empress's displeasure, and it is a proof of the unlimited authority which Maria Theresa exercised that this prohibition was effectual. Gradually, however, when the deepest mourning was over, rouge was again adopted. On the other sex Wraxall passes a severe judgement. According to him the Austrian exquisite was an insufferable mixture of awkwardness, ignorance, and pride, with an elephantine imitation of French manners. The standard of education at the universities and seminaries was very low; and in fact the sweeping character of the censorship, due mainly to Maria Theresa's bigotry, is sufficiently significant of the prevalent intellectual condition. The greater part of the books which formed the

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

library of cultivated people in England and France, nay, even in Florence and Rome, were forbidden, and their introduction was attended with difficulty and danger.

In the early part of Maria Theresa's reign, the court balls and other festivities were conducted with oriental magnificence, and gave rise to some grumbling on the part of her English allies, who had not furnished subsidies for such a purpose. Dutens tells of a masked ball at which there were six thousand persons, and supper prepared for ten thousand. The rooms were illuminated with eighteen thousand wax lights, and everything had been so thoroughly provided for that physicians, surgeons, and even midwives were in attendance in case of accident. The appointments of the palace — furniture, plate, and stables — were on a scale of reckless luxury, and, strange to say, all this was in the most terrible period of the Seven Years' War. Alms and pensions were another tremendous item in state expenditure, and every change in the ministry cost the exchequer the price of splendid estates and palaces to the in-comers, and consolatory presents to the out-goers. The change in the ministry by which Kaunitz came to the head of affairs cost the state a million gulden (£100,000).

When Joseph II was eight-and-twenty, Frederick the Great passed this significant judgement on him: "He has grown up at a bigoted court, and has rejected superstition; he has been brought up in splendour, and has adopted simple habits; he has been nourished on incense, and is nevertheless modest." An emperor filled with enthusiasm for the general well-being, a venerator of Rousseau, an assertor of right in opposition to privi-

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

lege, was indeed a new apparition on the throne of the Hapsburgs. "Since I have ascended the throne," wrote Joseph, "and have borne the first diadem in the world, I have made philosophy the lawgiver of my kingdom." Unhappily, Joseph and his lawgiver wrought in too crude a material for their creations to be lasting, and his nine years' efforts shared the fate of all sweeping reforms which emanate from a single mind, and are not the outgrowth of national development. An edict of tolerance was followed by the boldest measures tending to the emancipation of the Church from Rome, and the abolition of superstitious practices. In the suppression of monasteries and shrines, many precious manuscripts and works of art were lost, but in this matter Joseph was relentless; he was an adorer of the useful, and had little sensibility to art. The administration of justice, bureaucracy, taxation — every department was included in his schemes of purification and reform. His grand mistake was the attempt to force his wide and heterogeneous dominions into a system of centralization, a mistake which was soon revealed to him by the revolt of the Netherlands and of Hungary. In the curtailment of aristocratic privileges, and the cheapening of rank, his influence was more permanent. He not only ennobled mercantile men to an unprecedented extent, and created, to the amazement of Vienna, the first Jewish baron, but also enriched his exchequer by an indiscriminate sale of titles. The once imposing "von" became as common as the English "esquire." Joseph sternly refused to recognize rank as a claim to preferment. To the widow of a general of high birth, who had asked

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

him to give a company of infantry to her son, he wrote : "I by no means see the obligation a monarch is under to confer a place on a subject because he is an aristocrat by birth. . . . I know your son, and I know what belongs to a soldier. . . . Hence, I pity you, madam, that your son is fit neither for an officer, nor for a statesman, nor for a priest, — in a word, *that he is nothing but an aristocrat*, and is that to the backbone." The Prater, which had before been reserved for the nobility, was opened to the people, and nine years later, the Augarten also, with this inscription over its gate: "A place of recreation, dedicated to all men by one who esteems them." For the lavishness of Maria Theresa's reign was substituted the utmost economy in every department.

Joseph's personal habits were simple and laborious: he rose at five, and devoted his whole morning to work, the length of the morning varying according to the amount of business, so that his dinner, prepared for two o'clock, was often, to the anguish of cooks, kept waiting till four. His chief amusements were music, — for which he had considerable talent, writing a sonata, which Mozart told him, was "good, though he who composed it was better," — the theatre, travelling *incognito*, and conversation. He patronized the German and not the French theatre; for he was bent on giving the predominance to the German language, which had been so long thrust out of the court, first by Italian, and recently by French. During the later years of his life, he spent five evenings of every week in a select circle of the most intelligent women in Vienna, and on his death-bed, he wrote a charming note of thanks to this

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

little society, addressed, "Aux cinq dames réunies de la société, qui m'y toléraient." Joseph had a feverish impetuosity, a haste to set everything right, which was often self-defeating, and made Frederick the Great say of him that "he always took the second step before the first." But, as if to justify this haste, death soon came to put an end to his noble efforts. In the beautiful words of the Prince de Ligne, —

"Il entreprit beaucoup et, commençant toujours,
Ne put rien achever excepté ses beaux jours."

Joseph was deeply attached to his first wife, Isabella of Parma, in whose history there is a melancholy interest. Accomplished and agreeable, she had yet a deep stamp of sadness, which was either constitutional or, as some believed, the result of a hopeless attachment formed before marriage. She made Joseph happy by responding outwardly to his affection; but even after the birth of a child, she remained, when in private, unvaryingly sad, and frequently expressed to her female friends the belief that her death was near. This presentiment was fulfilled only two years after her marriage, and Joseph remained inconsolable for her loss. At length his sister Christina, with the idea of alleviating his sorrow, told him that Isabella had only apparently and not really returned his affection. This lightning-stroke at once scorched and seared Joseph's heart. For a long time he was embittered against women generally, and was with difficulty persuaded to a second marriage. The choice at length made was an unfortunate one; Joseph had no more domestic happiness, and died without children.

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

The two years of his feeble and dissolute brother Leopold's reign, from 1790 to 1792, were made memorable by the declaration of war against France, and were followed by the long reign of Francis II, who, in that notable shuffling of the cards known as the Congress of Vienna, dropped the venerable but long unmeaning title, "Emperor of Germany," and became "Emperor of Austria." Francis's affectation of the Viennese dialect, his professed interest in the private affairs of his citizens, his ostentatious observance of trivial laws, and his will, in which he bequeathed his love to his people, and promised to "pray for them at the throne of God," prevailed on some of his credulous subjects to believe that the virtual gaoler of Spielberg, the man who imprisoned Pellico and Gonfalonieri, and who betrayed Hofer, was a kind soul, a people's emperor. Civil crimes, such as murder, theft, and swindling, he often pardoned, but towards political crimes he was implacable; and he said of himself, "I am a bad Christian at pardoning — that is hard work for me; Metternich is much milder." Fonder of making sealing-wax and carving miniature boxes than of attending to affairs, he was yet too cold, suspicious, and obstinate to rely on others; and even Metternich was obliged sometimes to bend to his blind will, for "over stupidity the gods themselves are powerless." The good nature which he only affected his son Ferdinand really possessed; but he had also more than the paternal inheritance of genuine intellectual nullity. This harmless "King Log," whom the storm of 1848 swept into a safe nook out of the current of affairs, had a naïve conviction of his own efficiency

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

in the state. "I should like," he said, "for once to go to a suburban theatre, but it is impossible — I may be wanted"; and on hearing, in his retirement at Prague, that the good old *status quo* was fast returning, he exclaimed, "Ah, we made our people happy; but it was a dog's life we led!"

On the high priest of these wooden Dagon, Metternich, we have not space to dwell. Those who watched the earlier part of his career, saw no prognostics that he was to become, like Kaunitz, "the coachman of Europe," and keep the reins for nearly forty years. Stein pronounced him "vain, cunning, shallow, and frivolous," and despised the assiduity with which Metternich arranged *tableaux vivants*, and ranged the ladies who were to take part in them, at the very moment when momentous conferences were going forward. But while Metternich was playing the lady's man, he was acquiring his diplomatic accomplishments, in which he was avowedly both a pupil and a utilizer of women. When ambassador at Paris, in 1808, his first achievement was to win the favour of Caroline Murat, Napoleon's favourite sister. The Emperor at first said scornfully to her, "Amusez ce niais-là; nous en avons besoin à présent." But it was soon found that Metternich made important political use of the lady's smiles.

Every one knows how the great coachman had to lay down the reins, leave the box, and escape for his life; but as every one may not know a few particulars of this flight, which Count Mailath tells us, we will close with them our fragmentary sketches of Aus-

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUSTRIA

trian rulers and Austrian manners. After escaping from Vienna in a fiacre and remaining in concealment at a friend's house for three days, Metternich and his wife were at length safely deposited in a private carriage, supposed to be empty, on the railway at Olmütz. After remaining for seventeen hours shut up in this carriage, the Prince exclaimed, "Whether I die of thirst, or any other way, is all one; I must have something to drink." At a station he called for a glass of water, and thus the rest of the passengers became aware that the carriage was not empty. Immediately it was whispered about, "They are suspicious persons." At this critical moment the friend who had charge of Metternich's carriage let the conductor into the secret, and the signal for starting was given; several passengers who had got down were left behind, but the Prince was saved. Once more he was in danger. At an inn it was noticed that the pretended English always spoke French, and the fineness of their linen was remarked. The suggestion, "It may be Prince Metternich," was met with the energetic answer, "If I knew that, I would kill him with my own hand." This admonition that it would be well to push on was not neglected, and thenceforward their journey was pursued, without any further threatening adventures, to Holland, and finally to England.

GEORGE FORSTER

WE do not know a more touchingly tragical history than that of George Forster, who closed in so lonely and wretched a manner that life which, as a boy, he began so dazzlingly; leaping, when yet in his teens, into startling fame, and winning the lively interest of all Europe as the companion of Cook, and the recounter of his second expedition to those blessed isles of the Southern Sea. Other lives have been more violently chequered, or rent by abrupt incidents; but the web of none has been so altogether spun with the threads of straitened penury and grinding distress. It is curious to observe the course of lives: there are some whose very accidental adventures are pitched into such wondrous tune with their owners' tempers that fancy might stray to the thought of a moulding destiny designing their career from womb to death, — lives the turns and meetings of which strike so into their tendencies that they foster them, whether for weal or woe, as it were out of necessity, and beyond any aid or power of repression of their own. Doubtless, when closely viewed, the mystery proves to be only that such souls, endowed with lively quickness, seize on everything akin to their promptings, while dullards stumble blindly on their way, and mysterious destiny resolves itself into a goodly dose of enterprise. There are other lives which offer analogies more worthy of consideration: the lives of the children of

GEORGE FORSTER

their age, showing its sum total in their thoughts and doings as the blood and type of family come out in its offspring; the chance adventurers, who are transformed and diverted to their own purposes and feelings, as deluges turn to flooded lakes or rivers, according to the nature of the country that takes them in. Such men exist at all times; for times are the work of men, and in the summary of the man we learn to know mankind. George Forster was one of these. All his thoughts and doings are the utterings of that strange eighteenth century; as a boy turned into a mighty traveller suiting his age's spirit of inquiry, he remains his whole life long an eager, restless wanderer, an Ishmaelite on the face of his century, ever seeking and peering on to a brighter future; his temper is marked by that simple and undoubting trust in new perfections and coming certainties, with a credulous leaning to all novel and hidden truths, prevalent in his age, when man awoke to belief after centuries of slumber; his heart is honest and generous, his spirit eager, and freed from all he considers prejudice, allowing itself to soar into regions the subtle air of which is too rare to live in; a sufferer by his father's unbridled humours, in married life not slightly tried, and if not wholly wrecked then, saved only by a lifeboat of most thorough eighteenth-century build; renowned as a sailor round the world, and as the man who had brought to Europe knowledge of friendly savages, and who could, from personal acquaintance, describe new realms of nature and mankind to the sickened age yearning for fancied archetypes of man and the world; — all these characteristics give a special zest to poor George Forster's

GEORGE FORSTER

life. In short, we see mirrored in his history the whole painful lot and social shackling of a man of science of those days in Germany, and how a thinking and feeling mind became drifted athwart them into perilous rapids and breakneck eddies; we see a man gifted with the highest abilities and soundest learning, strong in spirit and heart, moreover privileged with a hold on the tastes of the public from the very nature of his fame, — we see this man, in spite of his advantages, doomed to toil his whole life long beneath a weight of trammels, unable to find the hand that might drag him out of the choking mud-sloughs of rotten petty courts, until at last he topples over the mighty chasm of the French Revolution. To the English public he is wholly unknown: to that of his own country, by a freak of destiny, he was until lately only notorious; for while straitened circumstances deprived his fine intellect of that repose as necessary to its nurture as light and space are to a tree to enable it to put forth perfect fruit, the peculiarities of his political adventures exposed him to an ill wind which blasted his memory. Almost all Forster's writings partake of a fragmentary nature and hasty slightness of design, which were imparted to them of a necessity from the enforced circumstances of their production. They are mostly essays, contributed regularly to journals, or prefaces to translations of travels, undertaken at the bidding of publishers; but as soon as we look at them, we perceive a fund of learning, lively feeling, and suggestive thought set forth in wording so full of natural charm that we at once guess a mind of no common power to be at work here. Twice only in

GEORGE FORSTER

the course of his hard-working life did he get respite enough to be able to undertake a connected production, — the first time, when, hardly past his boyhood, he wrote that account of his voyage with Cook which at once made his name known all over the world; the second time, just before the close of his career, when he began, but did not finish, his journey through Brabant and England. The two volumes he accomplished are his most perfect literary work, and show what would have been the fulness of Forster. Here is a mass of thoughtful observation and rich suggestion. The whole tone and scope of his writing were wholly different from the abstractness and vagueness from which no German thinker of his day was free; it had the life of reality about it, and his truthful feeling and keen eye made him so lively an expounder of nature that his method and style were the chosen model of Humboldt, as Forster's example was his first incentive to scientific exploration.

The youth he had spent in this country had accustomed his mind to the ways of public life, and imparted to it habits of practical thought, which impregnated his whole being, and distinguished him for readiness of bearing amidst the dim haziness of his countrymen. His turn of mind found in the study of natural science the only nurture which the arid social system of Germany left for it; but as soon as the great French Revolution loosened the stoniness in which he had been bound, the promptings of his nature made him strike at once into the genial soil of politics. In truth, the quickenings of his mind were those that stamp the citi-

GEORGE FORSTER

zen; he was public-spirited in the true sense of the word; and, bred in self-governing England, accustomed to public enterprise and rule, he stood before his countrymen, in the delicately organized manifoldness of his constitution, in the sparkle of his renown, and in charm of writing, like a prophet whose words, passing their understanding, were coarsely maligned. Therefore people's minds turned away from Forster until, when after nearly half a century the growth of enlightenment stirred up feelings of independence, men found that in him they had possessed one whose sound and patriotic aspirations had been altogether calumniated, and who combined the qualities of a noble intellect with the virtues of the citizen.

It is the interesting history of this man that Heinrich König recounts in a book ¹ undertaken under the inspiration of times in many respects akin to those of his hero, and written with a most intimate knowledge of the scenery of the story's plot. For many years he has studied every detail, however petty, of German history of the end of the last century; and before he entertained any thought of this book, he had already written a novel on the Revolution of Mayence which is a wonderfully accurate picture of the times, and the close researches for which had made him intimately acquainted with many parts of Forster's life.

George Forster was born on the twenty-sixth of November, 1754, at the poor village of Nassenhuben, near Danzig, where his father, whose Christian names

¹ *Haus und Welt, eine Lebensgeschichte.* Von H. König. Braunschweig, 1852.

GEORGE FORSTER

were John Reinhold, was the Calvinistic minister. He had been driven to this calling by his father, who had been highly displeased on learning that his son, while a student at Halle, had taken the liberty to desert the law for medicine and the natural sciences, in which he had made considerable progress. It thus happened that he was, as it were, turned off cramped from the very starting-post, and all through life's race he limped. Though ever an honest Protestant, science was more his love than theology, and the straits of his position chafed his temper to that irascibility which afterwards so marred his good and sterling parts. His son, who amidst all his trials never laid aside a most dutiful bearing towards him, strikes off the following sketch of him once in a letter to Jacobi:—

“My father is, in every respect, a useful man for the sciences, possessed of solid learning, choice reading, and book-lore, besides being a good naturalist, antiquary, and also theologian, although the last study does not occupy him any more, nor can it interest him scientifically, as I think. His warmth, hot temper, and eager battling for his ideas, have done him immeasurable harm, as it is also his misfortune that he does not know, and never will know, mankind,—always suspicious and credulous exactly there where he should not be so.”

We can fancy the quarrelsome divine plagued by his boorish parishioners in the midst of his study of Buffon, and flying into whims of wrongs under the friction of such daily worries. The living was not a fat one, while his family—for he early married a cousin—was the contrary of meagre; seven children required feeding,

GEORGE FORSTER

and the means to do so were not ready at hand. Under these circumstances the elder Forster, with his hankering for the sciences and his discontent with his parish, jumped at an offer made to him by the Russian Government to inspect and report on the new colonies founded on the banks of the Volga. Taking his son George, then eleven years old, with him, he spent the summer of 1765 in performing the journey and returning to St. Petersburg; in the autumn he handed in his report, the matter of which is said to have been so good as to have given the Empress suggestions for her great code of laws. His blustering temper, however, which often proved his worst enemy, closed his promising career in Russia; and he spent the winter in St. Petersburg, urging obstinate claims for recompense and imperturbably refusing to accept the offers made. During this time his wants drove him to the shifts of a translator, in which he called his boy to his aid, who was following the course of lessons at the high school, and who thus early was broken in to his lifelong drudgery of an overworked literary hack. At last the priest-sage gave vent to his anger with the Russian Government, and left St. Petersburg with the satisfaction of having at least had his will, if not the very sum of money, and none other than that which he had made his mind up to have. But if St. Petersburg and the Russians were well behind him and his son, it was not very clear what land lay ahead. The good Christians of Nassenhuben had provided themselves, during their high-priest's gaddings about on the Volga, with some ghostly vice-regent, who seems to have been unwilling to give up his realm on his lord's advent; and so

GEORGE FORSTER

John Reinhold, who perhaps rather liked the chance, conscious of his real acquirements and sphere of action, took the sudden resolve to seek his fortune in England, and, without even visiting his wife or family, sailed thither with his son. They sturdily fought off the dreariness of the voyage, lengthened by storms, with the study of English; and soon after their arrival, the father's solid scientific knowledge having gained him the good will of many distinguished men in London, he was appointed teacher of natural history at an educational institution for dissenting clergymen, at Warrington in Lancashire. George was apprenticed to a Russian merchant named Lewin; but the sedentary application of this life so pulled the youth down that when, on his mother and sisters' arrival, he escorted them to Warrington, his father became alarmed at his favourite child's looks, and kept him by him. George was thus brought back to the study of the natural sciences under his father's immediate influence; and as the latter soon embroiled himself, as usual, with his superiors, while the wants of his large family caused him to feel sorely pinched in his resources, the son had to put himself into the family traces, and help sturdily to keep the household van going. We find him, therefore, not only combining the parts of scholar and teacher, learning botany and zoölogy from his restless father, and teaching French and German in a neighbouring school to those who ought to have been his playfellows, but the poor youth's strength was still further strained by continual translations of foreign books of travels into English. Thus early was the boy brought to encounter those hardships

GEORGE FORSTER

of life whose freaks, in spite of his bold struggle, it was never his lot to be able to say that he was freed from.

From this time of his life a story remains which is told by all his biographers, as foreshadowing in its small burthen the haphazards which so often befell him, and the temper with which he took them. The pygmy professor's road to his lecture-chair lay past a pastry-cook's savoury stall of sweet cakes, and the tale of this temptation ended as temptations will end when brought to bear on lively flesh and blood; the savour tingled through his veins, till, wholly rapt by its witchery, he swallowed as many cakes as he could cram. The cook, however, like a crafty, worldly cook, only considered his pies' sweetness as the means of barter; and before their taste was off poor George's lips, the horror of dunnery and dismay of debt cut short his relish. Shame made him skulk along back ways; but the sharp cook's twinkling eyes would flash on him still, until his little heart burst forth its bitter distress in a fervent prayer, when, lo! on crossing the next fence on his hiding by-path, his eye caught sight of a guinea embedded in a horse's tread, and, having run to pay his debts, he bought with the remainder a gilt thimble for his sister. Painful troubles and dribbling windfalls of luck are indeed the tissue of his whole life; but if a lowness of spirit did come over him for a season in his gloomy times, one sunny ray was ever enough to lighten his heart and make it beat high and bold.

Under all these circumstances, and with the peculiar keen temper of Dr. John Reinhold Forster, it will be easily believed that he clutched at the sudden offer to

GEORGE FORSTER

accompany Cook as naturalist on his expedition. He only bargained to be allowed to take with him his son, then seventeen years of age; and so hurried was their departure that only nine days intervened between decision on the journey and embarkation. The history of this voyage is known to most persons. At that time all Europe eagerly watched its result; for since the discovery of America, no geographical riddles had so whetted its curiosity as those of the great Southern Sea. The fashionable idyllic sentimentalism of those times, so fostered by the hothouse breathings of B. de Saint-Pierre and Rousseau, was fascinated by the gentle savages and peaceful virgin isles of whose reality Cook's first voyage had given the certainty; and all the smirking skirmishers of enlightenment were on the eager lookout for new and startling confirmation of their yearning dreams. How the many and large views of nature such a journey brought with it must have impressed the quick mind of young Forster, already so given to a wandering, shifting life, can be easily conceived. The driest man could not have met with such a chance at such an age of his life without learning from it somewhat which lasted for the remainder of it. George Forster bore away with him that largeness of views on nature and man which so nobly marked his thoughts in all stages of his life; he got his mind enriched with a tender, yet a large and manly sense of nature's beauty, whose healthy freshness contrasted as vividly with the mawkish feeling of those times as a peasant girl's ruddy cheek with a painted face; but he also bore away from these three roving years a hankering after travel which never left

GEORGE FORSTER

him, and to which, under the weight of trouble, he was too apt to give himself up, as the drinker grasps at his dram, while the seeds of lasting illness were laid in his body by an attack of scurvy.

The enjoyment of these pleasures was somewhat marred by painful embarrassments arising from fresh outbursts of his father's wild temper, which chafed at the discipline of a man-of-war, entailing on the commander the necessity of severe measures to repress his mutinous freaks. The youth himself was, however, a favourite with Cook; and the language in which he speaks of him in a biographical sketch, written many years later, shows how thoroughly he knew the worth of that daring seaman's character. But when, on the return of the expedition, the Doctor, with headstrong stubbornness, ran foul of the Admiralty itself, George was dragged into the quarrel, or from filial love rushed into it to a degree which had a lasting influence. It seems that the elder Forster had not fully understood the meaning of his engagement with the Government, according to which no account of the voyage was to be published before the official one: the Admiralty, therefore, stopped the publication of a work he was preparing; and in consequence of the fiery naturalist's persistence in contesting its right to do so, it proceeded to an act which seems harsh, and might have maddened many a quieter man so laden with troubles, who saw his hopes of gain vanish, and nothing before him but poverty, debts, and a starving family, — it despoiled him of any share in the proposed Government publication. The blow was a desperate one. Yet even now the old man could not curb his

GEORGE FORSTER

temper ever so little, or matters would still have come to run more smoothly: George himself says as much in a letter of later date, although at all times he held his father to have been unjustly and most cruelly treated. As no mention of his own name had been made in the engagement with Government, he balked the Admiralty's precautions (probably at his father's desire) by writing himself an account of the voyage, — a proceeding which at the time exposed him to much abuse, and poisoned the quarrel beyond remedy. In this work the journey and the countries visited are described with simple truth, and a colour which shows how thoroughly his soul had become impregnated with the sunny warmth of the tropics. The artlessness of the account has a charm which carries the reader away, and is sufficient proof that, although the father looked over the scientific description of animals and flowers, the bulk of the work is entirely George's own. The success of the book was great; the author's name became at once well known, and the poor family garrets in Percy Street were enlivened by the hail of many a foreigner, anxious to see the lucky travellers who had, beyond doubt, beheld and been in the happy South Sea Isles. It was on the occasion of such a pilgrimage that George was first brought together with a young German physician, whose name was Sömmering. He had come over to England to attend its medical schools; and that attraction which had drawn him unto his renowned countrymen grew quickly into the tightest bonds of friendship with the younger of them, fastened by kinship in studies, and probably also by ties of masonic brotherhood, which

GEORGE FORSTER

then, and for many years after, largely took hold of their minds in that alchemistic form under which it so mightily swayed the thought of Europe of that century.

The proceeds of the book were, unfortunately, small in money; starvation daily haunted the wretched dwelling, barely staved off by petty gifts from a friend, or some German princeling, coaxed into dribbling forth scanty alms by a present of South Sea rarities; the sale of the latter also came to an absolute standstill, and the Admiralty was deaf to the roar of claims, till at last hard-hearted creditors came down on the forlorn family, and bore away its mainstay and pillar, and dreary King's Bench shut on the chafing Doctor. It was indeed a bleak and starving future which George had then to look upon, — his father imprisoned and no prospect of relief, his mother sick and his sisters weak and helpless, while he himself was racked by continued ill health maiming the sinews of his good will to work. He soon had to yield to the conviction that in England there was no chance of obtaining aid; so, with the one thought of straining his utmost nerve for his parents, he turned himself to his native country, from which sundry cheers of fellow-feeling had at times gladdened the wretchedness of Percy Street. Making up, therefore, a bale of dried plants and other specimens of natural history, in the hope some Continental museums might buy them, he, whose name was then trumpeted forth as the foremost of explorers, embarked at Harwich, to cross to Holland as an anxious pedlar and seeker of alms. Nothing can be more touching than to read in his letters to his parents

GEORGE FORSTER

his grief at their sorrows, and his unflinching trust in Providence: —

“I am well and fresh” (he writes to his father), “resigned, and full of trust that God will not forsake us; he has often proved his exceeding goodness, and will deliver us out of our present evil chances and hardships, which have weighed us down for these last years. I submit to all trials with the firm trust that they are meant for our best, and believe that, while I leave everything to the ordaining of the most perfect Being, I act neither unrighteously nor forwardly if I beseech him daily for the peace and earthly welfare of us all; for also here on earth we can reach to a certain pitch of happiness, and why, then, should we not pray for it?”

In these words we meet with two thoughts, which are the groundwork of Forster’s belief and lively trust in the happy ending of all chances, which, through every distress, kept him from continued hopelessness, yet never stiffened into dull fatalism, and a strong religious feeling, full of devout yearnings, but with an inborn loathing of all strained asceticism.

Though he was received by the learned men of Holland with the most flattering kindness, and every sort of civil attention was paid him, he soon saw that he could have no hopes of bettering his family by any help from that country. In his letter to his mother he pours out the sorrow of his heart: —

“My hopes to dispose of something here have been driven to the winds. There is, in plain speaking, no possibility of doing so. I am in the hands of Almighty God, and yield myself to his ordaining. Before me I see

GEORGE FORSTER

nothing but darkness; but let his will be done. Amen! Oh, alas, my poor heart! I can write no more. . . . The thought on mine in England has given me many a troubled moment. Are you well, dearest mother? — are you at all at rest? Does God send you comfort and courage in the tribulation which you have to undergo? Has no new need befallen our sorely pressed house?”

Driven on by such painful thoughts, George hastened to Germany, reproaching himself with the slightest delay. At Dusseldorf, then renowned for its galleries of art, he was, however, waylaid by Jacobi, who, with enthusiastic kindness, as soon as he heard of the famed traveller's arrival, wrote him before daybreak a pressing invitation to spend a whole day with him. Forster was fascinated by the society he was introduced to, and that spell in Jacobi's bearing which had ravished Goethe with delight. One of the lords of the German commonwealth of letters, the bosom friend of Goethe and of its chief leaders, whom he loved to gather around him at his country-seat at Pempelfort, he enthralled the loving temper of young Forster by the welling forth of his speech, which he would let flow in the full stream of enthusiasm. Forster found himself transferred, as it were by a wizard's wand, into the very midst of the choicest spirits of Germany, while the charm of Jacobi's kindly hospitality soothed his aching heart like balm. The latest poems of Goethe; snatches from “*Woldemar*,” which Jacobi was then writing; freshly received letters from the stars of literature, — were the treats which, during four days, were thrust on Forster, spiced by the touching kindness of his host and his sisters; he

GEORGE FORSTER

tore himself from Dusseldorf, enraptured with his new friends. "Such people as these we shall not meet again on our whole journey," was his exclamation to Alexander von Humboldt, when, twelve years later, on their trip to England, they turned out of their way to visit Jacobi.

Cassel was the goal of his immediate expectations. He had hopes that the new Landgrave, Frederick II, who partook of the fashionable taste for dallying with enlightenment, provided it could be done cheaply, might be tempted to gain a man of his father's fame for his new high school. This sovereign, who, during his father's lifetime, had forsaken his Protestant faith and ancestral views in politics, had, since his accession to his states, calmed the lively fears of the old servants of his house by steadily settling down into all the good old family ways. Although remaining a Catholic himself, he swore, as a true son of Hesse, to the maintenance of Protestantism in his country; and, quitting forthwith the Austrian court, with which while heir apparent he had been unmindful enough of his blood to flirt, he left off all new-fangled whims, to the delight of his grey-haired ministers, ruling as his father had ruled before him, to the comfort of himself and the fattening of his exchequer, which he shrewdly enriched by selling twenty-two thousand true Hessians to England for £7,000,000. If the sum seemed large, it also appears that the Landgrave had many calls for it. But George soon saw his hopes vanish afresh; the whole of the funds allotted for the mental enlightenment of such Hessians as were not gaining it in another way in Amer-

GEORGE FORSTER

ica had been sunk in a parcel of rubbishy marbles, which were their owner's joy and pride. A sum that might have freed the starving traveller from King's Bench, and have allowed him and his family to live at Cassel, could not possibly be made forthcoming; but in its stead his Highness deigned to admit George to a gracious audience in his statue gallery, and insisted on his delaying his filial researches till after the next sitting of his Academy of Antiquities, at which he accordingly held a discourse; and at last the Landgrave not only accepted a copy of the father's books, but even strained his poverty to the disbursing of a gift of fifty louis, besides thrusting on the unwilling son the appointment of professor of natural history at the University of Cassel, with the dazzling salary of seventy pounds. It is touching to read how anxiously Forster debated with his conscience, whether he would be justified in accepting anything for himself as long as he had not achieved that relief for his parents which he had set out to seek; and when at last he did accept, it was with the express understanding that he should be allowed certain months of absence, wherein he might bring his endeavours to a satisfactory result. At Göttingen he made acquaintances which afterwards ripened into friendship, — especially that of Heyne; and he wrote a letter to his father, — who he evidently feared might misinterpret his proceedings, — in which he tried to enliven his gloom by the friendly greetings of the leading members of that university; but such kindly wishes were all he reaped, both here and at Berlin, with the exception of a pittance of one hundred louis from the Prince of Dessau, bestowed in a

GEORGE FORSTER

warm-hearted manner, and coupled with the promise to use his influence in England with the Admiralty, to obtain some recompense, which, however, proved vain.

Such painful disappointments did not allow Forster to begin his stay at Cassel, in the spring of 1779, with a light heart; and his correspondence reveals his writhing efforts to burst his father's prison-bars, when, in the forlorn midnight of this gloom, a hidden hand all of a sudden thrust comfort and freedom on the wretched family. The masonic lodges of Germany, at the call of the Duke of Brunswick, their grand master, paid the father's debts, while the chair of natural history at Halle was to provide for his maintenance. True, however, to his self-willed temper, he nearly marred his own luck; for he could not for a long while be brought to give up the character of a victim, and insisted on his just claims, spurning what he deemed a dishonourable compromise, till the earnest entreaties of his family and the smarting reminiscences of imprisonment at last softened his resolve. If this happy event freed George's mind from a load of care, the spring of his spirits was now still further braced by a new piece of luck. Sömmering, the brother of his heart, — he to whom in the heyday of betrothal he wrote, "Love itself yields to the bond of soul which links me to thee," — obtained the professorship of anatomy at Cassel, by dint of sundry diplomatic wiles which his eager friend suggested to him; for the Landgrave had snatched up the crotchet that only Frenchmen knew the science, and it wanted no little knack to master his whims. With such intercourse to encourage him, he set to his duties with eagerness, employing his leisure hours

GEORGE FORSTER

with a translation of Buffon, to the account of which were put sundry trips to the library of Göttingen, which were perhaps suggested, if the whole truth were known, by other promptings than those of absolute literary research.

Nor was the society of Cassel wanting in interest; besides many men of more or less distinction who were attached to its high school, it counted the illustrious historian, Johannes von Müller, amongst its residents, between whom and Forster an intimacy sprang up; so that, had it not been for other discomforts, he might have contentedly endured the petty worries of court attendance; for the Landgrave regarded his university, with its staff, as his toys, and Forster found, on promotion to the inspectorship of a most threadbare cabinet of natural history, that he shared with the statue gallery the honour of being his Highness's chief entertainer. But the want of money, the canker of his life, soon made its gnawings felt. The pittance of his salary, and the loss by shipwreck of all his little property on its way from England, had made it impossible for the famished youth to start his establishment, however frugally, without a loan the cost of which shackled him like a galley-chain. Jacobi, with whom he kept a close correspondence, in which he poured forth his sorrow into his kind and sympathetic heart, had already of himself devised how to help his friend to ease, by procuring for him the administratorship of the proposed new customs board for the Duchy of Berg, intending to pay from his own purse the required security of thirty thousand thalers, when his hopes were

GEORGE FORSTER

disappointed by the abandonment of the whole plan. He now, therefore, on hearing of his friend's straits, came forward at once with his generous feeling, and thrust on him a loan of twenty-five pistoles in so brotherly a manner that Forster was forced to yield all misgivings about its acceptance. But this sum was far from enough to ensure him from further difficulties. In consequence of the miserable resources of the university, he found himself obliged to provide books at his own outlay, and, in spite of convulsive attempts at thriftiness, debt dogged him like a spectre. "Fy! fy! I can't get a book to look at here, unless I buy it," he writes to Jacobi. "Cassel is a perfect wilderness, as regards new books, for the annual sum allotted for procuring such for the Prince's library does not amount to £60." Under such circumstances it is easy to feel that alchemistic notions, if once allowed to be at all entertained, must have involuntarily lured him on with absorbing temptations.

Freemasonry, in the garb of Illumination and Rosicrucianism, at that time had largely laid hold of the mind of Germany. Its many interturnings are not easy to unravel through the mazes of its stealthy course; but in every court and in every high school its high priests were then to be found, — for the catholic tone of its mystic language had charms for the most varied tempers, — and thus, at the dawn of the sunrise of modern science, we see the smouldering embers of the alchemist's nightly furnaces flare through the breadth of the land once more into flame, fanned by the adroit breathings of jugglers on that vein of faith which ran, as it were, in

GEORGE FORSTER

irony so fully through an age boastful that the amulet of enlightenment shielded it from reach of dupery and superstition. The Rosicrucians were especially devoted to this scientific dressing-up of mysticism; and the possibility of finding prime matter endowed with the virtues of an universal medicine and the transmutation of metals was seriously entertained by men of learning, and its research followed by many. We know that both the Forsters were keen freemasons; and a letter from George to Heyne informs us that it was through masonry that he became intimately acquainted with the Rosicrucians. Sömmering, his bosom friend, had joined the brotherhood, which counted amongst its active members most of the leading professors of Cassel; and even the great Johannes von Müller had allowed the shrewd twinkle of his keen sight to be hoodwinked for the nonce. Eagerly and fervently did these associates stimulate each other in the prosecution of what they held to be the great work, conjointly with their brethren spread on the surface of the globe. At this time an event happened which startled the scientific world, and the tidings of which were caught up with nervous eagerness by the brethren of Cassel. The witheringly sarcastic Lichtenberg, that keen intellect the bolts of whose wit loved to split the very heart of humbug, seriously communicated to his friend Forster trustworthy accounts of transmutations of metals by Dr. Price, in England, in the presence of competent witnesses. The doings of this man were, indeed, such as to attract general attention. A member of the Royal Society, and a wealthy practitioner in Guildford, he believed or professed to have discovered a

GEORGE FORSTER

powder able to change silver or mercury into gold; and after two years spent in doubt (as he averred) whether to publish or keep secret his discovery, he spoke of it to some friends, one of whom was Grose the antiquary, and to whom he even showed proofs of his skill. Success emboldened him to lay aside his fears, so that during several months of the year 1782 he exhibited before anybody who chose to visit him at Guildford evidence of his power to change mercury into gold and silver by means of certain white and reddish powders; and at last, on the thirtieth of May of that year, he produced an ingot of silver weighing two ounces, which he offered as a present to the King. All this he described in a pamphlet, containing numerous testimonials signed by unexceptionable witnesses, — amongst them Lords Onslow, King, and Palmerston. On the demand, however, of the Royal Society, that its fellow should renew his marvels before a chosen board, Price refused to do so, on the ground that he had exhausted his stock of philosopher's powder, the preparation of which required much time; and that, as a Rosicrucian, he was bound to maintain the secrets of the craft. Finding, however, that by such excuses his credit was thoroughly shaken, he retired, in January, 1783, to his laboratory at Guildford, announcing that he would be back in London in a month; and, having first prepared a large decoction of laurel juice and written his will, he shut himself up in his study, when six months passed by before the world again heard of him. The Royal Society, at the end of that time, received an invitation to visit him in a body on a certain day; but when, instead of the whole society, he saw but one or two of his

GEORGE FORSTER

colleagues arrive, he was so stung at the contempt shown for him and his discovery, that, entering his closet, he destroyed himself with the poison he had prepared. Before the melancholy end happened, the announcement of Price's success excited the greatest interest; and was not Forster's heart made to leap with a fevered heat, when the hope of escape from poverty seemed to be visibly beckoning to him? It is nowhere clearly stated how far he allowed himself to be practically inveigled into great loss of time. Forster acknowledges in letters, and König supposes, that both he and Sömmering melted away much useful money in their Rosicrucian crucibles. It was not, however, a greedy want of gold which had been our friend's snare; his heart, in mysticism, was noble as in everything else. The mystic piety of language and the cosmogonic professions of the society had enticed his religious feeling and his inquiring mind. In letters to Sömmering, he prays that the Spirit of Jesus might lead them in holiness, forbearance, and love; and in the following extract from a letter written to his bride after his breaking off with all secret brotherhoods will be found a picture of his hopes and delusions:—

“You know that I was a dreamy enthusiast; but few people could be aware how far I was one, and to what degree I had allowed myself to be carried away, for I held it as a duty to keep it hidden. I have believed everything. The conviction that those who had misled me into this faith were morally bad *themselves*, opened my eyes. I thought, then, that I saw the whole pile of this fabric of faith resting on the point of a needle, which on inquiry I found to be itself rusted and crumbling. I was

GEORGE FORSTER

like one who awakes from a heavy dream, and finds that he has escaped danger of death. . . . Nothing is more intoxicating for one so vain as I was than to look upon the great interlinkings in the plan of creation; to be drawn near to God, — viewing, as it were, through him to read and overlook that universe in concentration which seems to lie before us in disorder that baffles understanding; to be the familiar of the world of spirits, — one's self a little demigod, whole lord of the creation; and to know all, even the yet hidden powers of nature; — all this by the easiest means in the world, through boundless seraphic love of the most perfect Being, intimate communion in spirit with him, self-denial in the highest degree, a forsaking of all vanity, continued ascetic intercourse with him, and a contemplative as well as practical spying by experiments into nature, etc. From such a height as this, the fall, as can be foreseen, was far from soft."

It is the greatest proof of Forster's healthy soundness that when he did wake to the self-knowledge of his trance, it was to renewed strength, — as illness cleanses a strong body of a surfeit of bad humours. He wished himself joy that he had thrown off such a charge of dreaminess before his thirtieth year; and, taking up his studies with no loss of true enthusiasm, he zealously tried to lessen the heap of debt which his mistakes had probably helped to pile up, by renewed translations and active contributions to literary journals. He, who by the chances of his early life had seemed to have been born at once to manhood, had proved how all must pay Nature's debts, and, having cheated her of his childishness

GEORGE FORSTER

in his teens, she had exacted from his manhood payment of her calls. But now Forster the *man* was born, and he was a goodly and a noble man. "The past is behind me," he says in the letter last quoted, "and I still retain a burning desire to arrive at the best possible insight of what we call truth, which my nature is able to arrive at."

In spite, however, of this sturdy spirit, Cassel and all belonging to it had become loathsome to him. The remembrance of his errors was there continually thrust upon his thoughts, and all social enjoyment poisoned by Sömmering's trouble of mind, who, a true comrade to the last, had left at the same time with him the brotherhood which they had entered together, but bore away so trembling a fear of the wrath of his fellows, that it haunted his every step, and kept such a hold of his mind, even until his death in 1830, that when Forster's widow was preparing his letters for publication in 1829, Sömmering not only refused to contribute those in his keeping, but entreated her, even by threats, not to broach a hint, in her sketch of her husband's life, as to any connection with secret societies. Against such daily wrong of life neither learned dissertations on the breadfruit and other points of natural history, nor translations of books of travels, proved sufficient antidotes; and he who had already feverishly exclaimed that a great journey alone could restore him to usefulness, can be well believed to have felt quickenings of joy at the sudden chance of removal to a new world. He was offered the professorship of natural history at Wilna in Poland, and accepted it, not merely on his own hasty promptings, but by the counsel of such wary friends as Lichtenberg and

GEORGE FORSTER

Heyne. The conditions were, in fact, such as might have tempted many a literary man: besides a fair salary, a sum was settled for correspondence and the purchase of specimens of natural history, while the flattering language of the Primate Poniatowsky's letter was backed by subscriptions which freed him from his liabilities at Cassel, and provided for his travelling outlay. Thus, at a moment when the atmosphere of Cassel choked his manly vigour, luck seemed to shower on him the very windfall befitting his wants; and with the good cheer with which he had formerly run to buy his sister a thimble with the chance sovereign that saved him from his boyish scrapes, he now leapt forward to snatch the happiness which seemed to be beckoning him.

Happiness this time appeared to him in the guise of a young girl of twenty. During his visits to Göttingen he had learnt to know Theresa Heyne, and had been struck by her feeling disposition and artless liveliness. She had been brought up in early youth at a distance from home; and a freedom of carriage, thus contracted from habit, was increased by the enthusiasm of her temperament, while daily intercourse with the distinguished men who frequented her father's house fostered a feverish liking for all which partook of intellectual superiority and excellence. Her feelings with regard to Forster are told by herself in the following words, written when the reflection of age threw its clear, steady light upon the dark eddies of her life:—

“The girl had seen Forster repeatedly on his visits to Göttingen during his stay at Cassel; and the most heartfelt regard, which lasted till his death, gave her trust in

GEORGE FORSTER

him, while compassion for the forlorn position which awaited him in lonely Poland, hearty feeling, youthful spirit, and pride, spurred her to share the stern lot of the famed man; and thus she gave Forster the preference over other prospects."

A certain easily fanned rapture, and something which partook of a love of frolic, were therefore, in truth, rather the spurs of her resolve than a thorough love passion. George, on his part, with his susceptibility and generous feeling, was strongly drawn to the lively girl; and although the kindly old father, with his wary forethought, would not allow himself to be edged into express sanction of the marriage, as long as Forster's worldly means were so doubtful, the eager girl soon dragged his good will into a tacit understanding that the wedding should come off as soon as Polish pledges proved trustworthy; and he started for his new home with the consciousness of being betrothed. He passed through Vienna on his way; when, what with the flow of his spirits at this the heyday of his life, when he saw gloom and error behind him, while happiness and ease were awaiting him in the future, and what with the flattering attention paid him by high and low, his delight was such that his letters overflow with enthusiastic praise of that capital, which for a long while remained the Elysian paradise of his fancy. The Emperor Joseph received him in his closet, with his well-known friendliness, and on dismissing him, after much talk, foretold him laughingly that he would not long stay in the wilderness of Poland; while invitations from the mighty Kaunitz, and choice meetings at the house of the celebrated Countess Theresa Thum,

GEORGE FORSTER

whose pride and joy it was to gather together the picked spirits of Vienna, showed in what esteem the traveller was held by all.

The first impression of Polish bleakness was indeed gloomy, and he owns that what he saw on crossing the frontier filled his soul with dismay, although he had tuned his expectations down to the lowest pitch. The rawness of October weather fretted his sickly frame, which always suffered cruelly from cold and damp; while all the endless discomforts of jolted travel through fathomless roads, and lodging at filthiest hovels, crowded on him, yet revelling in the fresh memory of Vienna.

At Grodno he found himself in the very heart of the life and court of Poland. The first free diet which had met since many years was then holding its sittings there; and the mean huts and filthy lanes of the so-called city were thronged by the motley crush of Polish aristocracy, from the King and magnificent magnates with their dazzling followings, down to the equally haughty peasant nobles swaggering about with their big swords (the badge of their rank), while they floundered through the mammoth sloughs of mire in huge boots lined with dirty straw, in their proud disdain of the effeminacy of stockings and linen. Amongst the higher classes, however, he found many persons possessed of much elegant culture, which was, moreover, set off by a lordly hospitality, in which they vied with each other to show how highly they valued the gain of so noteworthy a man to their country. The King's sister, commonly called Madame de Cracovie, because her deceased husband, Marshal Branicki, had been Castellan of Cracow, received him

GEORGE FORSTER

with the most marked kindness, and presented him herself to her brother, whom he often saw in the familiarity of her evening meetings. That worn-out lover of the great Catherine, by whose bounty he had been pensioned with the royalty of Poland, had a mind whose dainty and over-refined taste delighted in the society of literary men, and Forster experienced the courtesy of his bearing, while the assurances of good will which he gathered from the King and Primate for himself and the university encouraged his hopes for the future. It was, therefore, with pleasurable feelings that he continued his journey in November, on the closing of a diet with the unwonted open-handedness and even flow of which the Government expressed itself delighted, though Forster writes that not a day passed but the Marshal of the Lower House smashed sundry staves of office in trying to allay uproar.

The first acquaintance with Wilna did not discourage him. It was true that "the cabinet of natural history proved not only a child in its cradle, but not even a fine child, while the library was most meagre"; but then he had the assurance that their wants were acknowledged and would be made good. The university, as most of the schools in Poland, had been founded by the Jesuits, in consequence of whose suppression the whole system of education was being remodelled. His lodging was in the old palace of the Order, and, though wretchedly bleak and bare, he comforted himself by comparing it with those of his fellow teachers, and by the readiness with which such changes as he asked for were granted. Many of the Jesuits remained attached to the high

GEORGE FORSTER

school as laymen; and although he arrived by no means well disposed towards them, — having been fully warned by the great Jesuit-croaker, Nicolai, against their wiles, — his first letters speak the praise of their unselfish behaviour, so that he even utters his conviction that the Jesuits of Wilna, at least, do not deserve the suspicion under which their brethren generally labour. The difficulties of his position showed themselves immediately on entering upon his duties, when he had to deliver his lectures in Latin; for though a master in German style, and able to write English and French with wonderful correctness, Latin composition was a labour which cost him “an everlasting time”; while the unwonted tongue hampered his speech, which was at all times highly embarrassed in the professor’s chair, although its flow in conversation was astounding. But athwart the wintry cloudiness of his horizon there was the light of his love to cheer him on; so, sturdily attacking the hardness of the Polish tongue, he hotly tried to overcome all bars between himself and happiness. The winter was thus employed by him in preparations for his marriage, which was fixed for the summer; and so engrossed was his mind in this one thought that at first he overlooked how sundry impediments were being slyly thrown in the way of his university career. The fears he felt for Theresa’s comfort in the dreary banishment of Wilna were laughed at by her eager temper, and her lively fancy rejoiced at the prospect of hardships to be overcome; in spite of which Forster’s tender care for her ease would not rest content with any but a home of such snugness that the nakedness of Polish shops and

GEORGE FORSTER

the dull sloth of Polish workmen could not be got to fit it up, and in the warmth of his heart he launched into the outlay of getting furniture and servants from abroad. Forster always had a love for household comfort which was above his means, and is startling in a man of so roving a turn of mind. He would have spent lordly incomes had he possessed them; and with all his zeal for thriftiness, the close spirit of reckoning was not in him. Not that he had a bent for squandering, but with his scientific occupations he could never resist the purchase of books, charts, and instruments; and his only taste which could be chid as partaking of extravagance was this love of snugness, which, from repeated change of dwelling, brought heavy pulls on his purse. So little did any fondness for show enter into this liking that to save money for it he even refused himself horses, which, according to Polish ideas of respectability, were nearly as necessary household articles as clean linen with us. As all such bits of economy were, however, altogether insufficient to mend the hole made in his income, he restlessly sought means of repairing it, and at last decided on perfecting himself in the study of medicine. There was a great want of physicians in the country, and the skill of such as there were was eagerly sought and richly paid by noble Poles, who seemed to have pinned their faith in health on the multitude of doctors; for we are told that as soon as anything like ailing was felt, the sick man called all the leeches together he could lay hold of, when he himself would preside, and adjudge their debate. With feverish looking forward to spring and happiness, he thus fretted through the drear-

GEORGE FORSTER

iness of his first Polish winter in utter loneliness and daily worry; for, as time wore on, he saw that none of the pledges made to him were kept, while painful rheumatisms and weakened eyesight, brought on by climate, racked his poor body, until, at the very moment of his start on his longed-for journey, a putrid fever laid him for several weeks on a sick-bed, and threatened to cut short his life in its bloom. Convalescence, like all other things, is helped by a stout heart; thus, as soon as the crisis was surmounted, his eagerness quickened his recovery, so that he reached Göttingen in August, 1785; and, having been married in the beginning of the following month, he hastened back with his wife to his bleak banishment.

Henceforth Forster's household was the sanctuary wherein alone, during the remaining two years of his stay in Poland, he found refuge from endless teasing and annoyance. If fancy rather than thorough love had made Theresa become his wife, acquaintance with her husband at all events at first confirmed and increased her good opinion of him. Forster always maintained in his daily bearing so chaste a delicacy that his widow declares never to have seen him guilty of an unseemly outburst; and this overwrought unwillingness to ruffle her peace of mind was such that he never brought himself to unfold his many straits to her, until this very silence produced the misunderstanding which it had been meant to avoid. Thus, while in his generous fear lest she should not be fully aware of the lot she was encountering, he had always dwelt much on the privations awaiting her in Poland, this nice feeling had kept him

GEORGE FORSTER

from alluding to the pet home he had prepared ; so that the young woman was quite rapt with joy to find so snug a dwelling on her arrival at Wilna. It was, in truth, not more than they wanted ; for beyond it they found no comfort. If Cassel was loathsome, yet how grand was it when compared with the Polish University, which had not even one bookseller ! Intercourse with the world was slow and difficult ; he could not often even hear of new books, much less get a sight of them ; so that his letters to Lichtenberg piteously beg for the crumbs which might be swept from the fulness of his literary table. The want of all congenial society was the bitterest hardship to him ; for the revels of the Lithuanian nobles had no charms, and his Jesuit fellows, on closer knowledge, had come out in their true light. Having failed in their stealthy stalking for the father and mother's souls, they hoped to net that of George's first-born child ; but their wiles were roughly torn by a gruff sally, "that, as baptism must be, it should be done according to Calvinism," and henceforth their friendship was at an end. The turmoils of the State and the ill will discovered to be borne to the university by the Primate, who even applied its funds to the one of Cracow, abashed his trust in promised improvements which would have enabled him to make himself practically useful ; yet every time that in a fit of anguish he eagerly jumped at a chance of escape from this forlorn banishment, he was quickly dragged back by the feeling of its impossibility. By agreement he had bound himself to serve for eight years, in consideration of the payments whereby he had been freed from his Cassel

GEORGE FORSTER

debts; and no literary labour in his present wilderness, obliged as he was to buy at great expense every book he might require, could ever enable him to pay off this loan. Thus was there nothing for him but patience, rendered doubly irksome by continued attacks of painful illness. His courage, nevertheless, never flagged for any length of time; and as soon as health buoyed up his good cheer, his letters showed him even dwelling on the advantages of his abode in Poland.

“The experience which I have gained through this change of residence has been dearly bought, but is withal worth much; I was obliged to see black against white, that I might know what white was. I owe it to my journey hither that I am aware of the full worth of many things, and chiefly of friendship. My mind has also obtained much growth and enlightenment which I should not have gained by staying at Cassel. Oh! a good shove, which thrusts us all at once out of the centre wherein we have long been resting, or in which we have been moving around our own pivot, gives us so thorough a shaking that one gets to espy countless new things in one’s self and others. . . . Here, at all events, I can become wise through my faults, in perfect peace, for I can commit my faults and mend them unperceived. I look at Wilna as my caterpillar’s case, — I am bound for eight years, after that come my wings, and the perfect insect will follow its destination.”

He even produced, besides sundry translations, two little works which deserve notice, to the writing of which he devoted himself so assiduously that long before day-break he sat at his desk, and his health began to suffer

GEORGE FORSTER

from the strain. The one was a dissertation on "The Human Race," intended as an answer to an essay by Kant on the same subject, in which mistaken statements had been made about the South Sea Islanders. The dogmatic boldness with which the metaphysician laid down the law in matters of science displeased Forster, who in general had little liking for speculative philosophy, and even called Kant, in a private letter, "the arch-sophist and arch-scholastic of the age." In this dissertation, which is written with great moderation, he maintained the existence of distinct races of men, though he did not deny their belonging to one kind. The other work was a "Life of Cook," already alluded to, the dedication of which was graciously acknowledged by the Emperor Joseph — a fact rendered highly remarkable by the broad freedom of thought running through the whole book, which contains, as in a summary, the political faith which guided Forster's future conduct. It has often been noticed that there is not a single passage in any of the French writers of the eighteenth century which shows any foreknowledge of the revolution which was coming over their country, although many travellers (amongst them Goldsmith) foretold it; but there is no man whose prophecies can vie in clearness with those of Forster. As early as 1782, he exclaimed in a letter to his father, "Europe seems to be on the point of a fearful overthrow"; and in a remarkable fragment amongst his writings, the precise date of which is not known, the following striking words occur: —

"We stand at the close of the century; this universal longing for change in our present forms, for relief from

GEORGE FORSTER

our many defects, the searching hither and thither, this revolt of reason against political pressure, this supremacy of understanding over feeling, these educational institutions for the rearing of sensible machines, these convulsive clutchings of faith at miraculous powers beyond the realm of understanding, this struggle between enlightenment and religion, this universal leavening, — herald a new teacher and a new doctrine.”

Yielding to his heart's ever warm interest in his fellow beings' weal, he had been steadily growing in his age's political thought, so that it was ever engrossing the better part of his mind; and while, therefore, it is not wonderful that in 1787 he should have arrived at writing as he then did, it is most wonderful that the head of the Holy Roman Empire should have nodded approbation to such words as these: —

“Human infallibility is disappearing before the dawn of knowledge. Tolerance and freedom of conscience proclaim the victory of reason, and make the way for freedom of the press and free search into all those relations which, under the name of truth, are of value to man. Lastly, luxury and industry are giving new worth to life; the arts are attaining the height of perfection and simplicity; observation and experience are enlarging and combining all knowledge, and all political powers are tending to an equality; in short, it is, or is about to be, the season of flowering.”

It is well to recollect these words in connection with Forster's after life; for they prove how he was not then whirled away by a sudden puff of rapture, but obeyed the long-flowing stream of his thoughts.

GEORGE FORSTER

Early one morning in the month of June, 1787, Forster was disturbed at his desk by the entry of a Russian naval officer, who, presenting him with a letter from the ambassador, Stackelberg, made the startling announcement that he had full power to settle all terms, if he would agree to accompany a voyage of discovery in the Southern Ocean. What a leap for Forster from dreariest banishment into the very Eden of dreams! The open-handedness of the Russian Government removed all difficulties about the repayment of his loans, and an ample salary was assigned to him, as also a pension for his wife in the event of his death; while his delight with luck was raised to the highest pitch by the promised companionship of Sömmering, whom the Empress immediately appointed physician to the expedition, on Forster's recommendation; and as soon as ever he had brought his affairs to a close, he hastened away, traversing with six post-horses the space between Poland and Göttingen, which he reached on the sixteenth of September. His hopes were fated to meet with a sad dash: the outbreak of the Turkish war caused the voyage to be laid aside for the present; and as Forster would not accept an appointment at St. Petersburg just after his escape from Polish winters, he was turned adrift on the world with a year's salary, but free from debt, so that, though pleasant visions had come to nought, he yet blessed the wondrous luck which alone had been able to snatch him from Poland and set him down in the heart of Europe. A vague chance of employment in the Philippine Isles also proved vain, and is only worth remembering for a letter he wrote with a description of himself, which shows that practical

GEORGE FORSTER

matters had so laid hold of his attention that he held himself to be more fitted for affairs than for science proper, while he thought himself free from the usual prejudices of "learned men, who, having small knowledge of the world, seldom understood how to fit their theories and hypotheses on to the real business of life."

While Forster was thus anxiously looking around him for some opening suitable to his wants, his attention was drawn to the electoral city of Mayence, where his old friend Johannes von Müller had just vacated the librarianship, on promotion to be the Elector's private secretary, while the prospect of the society of Sömmering who had for several years taught anatomy there, was a most powerful attraction. By the counsel of friends he went thither, that his presence might draw attention to him; and, having been presented to the Elector by Müller, his appointment was decided on with a speed unwonted for the lazy sluggishness of spiritual courts. The salary was small; but then there was the advantage of a central position, which the portly Elector, with sly shrewdness, pointed out to him when, throwing open the casement of his closet, he showed him the view over the Rhine, and its rich banks, asked him to compare it with Poland, and went on to reckon the cheapness of provisions, — backing the whole with promise of regular payment.

It is as well shortly to describe the soil into which Forster was now transplanted; for it was owing to its nature that his life took the turn it did. The ancient German Empire was dying the death of corruption, and the very death-slumbers of its elders were being broken

GEORGE FORSTER

in upon by forward heirs; foremost among whom was Prussia, who, like a nightmare, bestrode and pinched them, even at the point of death. Everywhere there was silent dissolution of the powers that had been ruling, while popular spirit and enlightenment as yet only flitted here and there through the land, like the will-o'-the-wisps that flicker about churchyards. German courts lay lazily bedded in a woof of wiles and tricks whose toils entangled the strength of the whole land, out of whose richness it had been spun for the enjoyment of a few sly cozeners. In looking at their doings and lives, so fevered and so bloated, one might think them creations banded by spells to a hectic existence, and who could not but fade away as soon as the healthy air of truth stole upon their pampered being. The time-honoured See of Mayence, with whose spiritual electorate was coupled the arch-chancellorship of the Empire, as it had ever been one of the chief pleasure-haunts of the lustiness of Rhenish prelacy, so was it in its decay the hotbed of corruption. The predecessors of the reigning Elector had, like the Emperor Joseph, partaken of the reforming fashion of his time, and had foolishly thought that the worn-out body might be quickened again into youth. The Elector — simple, good-natured man, the chief feature of whose temper was kindly trustful feeling, and a fondness for plain burgher-like life — forsook the wonted pomp of a high prince of the Empire, to follow the bent of his homely likings. Instead of having courtly feasts, he not only mingled in the holiday gambols of the citizens, but he forfeited the indulgence of his courtiers, who with shrugs would have winked

GEORGE FORSTER

at these whims of a sovereign, by his harmful meddling in the olden habits of the State. Saints were curtailed of their dues, monkish trickery was checked; and when, in 1773, the Jesuits were suppressed by the Pope, Eusmerich Joseph seemed like a man who felt a load off his chest, and launched forth into plans for setting up sound schools in his lands. The Jesuit party was, however, not crushed, though beaten; and on the Elector's suspicious death in the following year, before he had time to carry out all his plans, they carried by a push the election of Canon Erthal as his successor. Shrewd, ambitious, and thoroughly worldly, he had graduated in the schools of courtly diplomacy, where he had acquired that varnish whereby poor wits can for a time pass themselves off as minds of superior stuff. As the party had worked the strong Catholic feeling of the population, the new Elector began his reign with a mighty show of piety and devotion that edified the mob, but which were laid aside for more congenial pastimes, as soon as their need was less apparent; the banqueting-halls of the archiepiscopal pleasure palaces rang with the revelry of feasts, the spice of whose cheer was set off by ribald wit.

“The Prince's spirit of thrift was changed into the wantonest court pomp, pious cant into voluptuous sensuality, and church zeal into a little freethinking. Instead of evening devotions, a late hour brought with it a refined supper for a knot of chosen fellows, to which sometimes artists and witty heads were admitted. The knee-cushions remained as footstools, before the pleasure-couches brought from Paris and London. Foot-

GEORGE FORSTER

washings and layings-on of hands had been withdrawn (who knows with what ceremonies) into the innermost chambers of the castle of Saint Martin, beyond the whispering Rhine and the gaze of the public. Father Goldhagen's theological discussions had been exchanged for talk with Heinse about his novel, 'Ardinghelle'; in the room of the Deacon's service in the Missal, Madame de Coudenhoven read Voltaire's 'Pucelle' and the 'Lettres Persanes' to her French-talking friend, herself so clothed that the listener could easily attach himself to the visible instead of the edifying, and kiss the fair reader himself, in lieu of the gospels formerly offered by the Deacon." ¹

Altogether, as far as bedding and nursing will go, the reverend prelate, Erthal, should have been snugly off in this world, — well fed, softly bedded, and gently cherished by two willing damsels; so that when the stately Coudenhoven found that she palled on his old heart, her charity loved to find her Cousin Ferette at hand as a safe cordial to warm it.

Around this foul carcass as the main pier of this Augean stable, the inmates of its stalls stood ranged and grouped. The throng was choicely noble; for the utmost that was given to a burgher in Mayence was the gift of a clerkship. The nobility was, however, far from being all on an equality within itself, and the highest class, whose string of ancestors enabled them to stand the tests required for canonries, looked down as haughtily on their lower fellows as those again on the mob of burghers at large; while besides, and above all hered-

¹ *Haus und Welt*, vol. ii, p. 14.

GEORGE FORSTER

itary rank, there was the consecration of holy orders, whereby, first, only even the highest-born nobility became entitled to share fully the fatness of the State. Gluttony, wassailing, and a greedy craving for rich prebends were the main qualities of these servants of the Church; and it was well when, in the revelry of their drinking-bouts over flagons of old Rhenish, which in summer-time they loved to hold in the pleasure-grounds of their lordly abbeys scattered along the stately river's banks, their wanton humour would be content with such harmless freaks as wagering whether this or that lady's calves could be encircled by the ribbons of their gold canon's crosses.

Yet were there some men amongst them who, athwart all this overcoat of fashionable dross, were not without stuff, and who learned, in the shifts and wiles of this evil haunt, that great skill in statecraft which enabled them to juggle the world at large. Thus Forster found here Stadion, who, from a gay and enterprising canon, became one of the leading ministers of Austria; while the master of modern statesmen, Prince Metternich, took his first lesson in cunning in this high school of human worthlessness. High above these in nobleness of nature, as in the splendour of his birth, but so hampered by the contradictions between his position and his likings that he never mastered their difficulties, and thus through life had an awkward hesitation in his public conduct which looked almost like wilful trimming, was Dalberg, Bishop of Erfurt, coadjutor and expected successor of the Elector; but who afterwards, under Napoleon, became Duke of Frankfort, and died as Bishop

GEORGE FORSTER

of Ratisbon. His love of letters was great; and so zealously had he devoted his fine intelligence to study, especially of metaphysics, that his works ranked him amongst his country's leading writers, while his position and prospects caused him to be looked to, by such men as Schiller, as the coming Lorenzo de' Medici of Germany. Everything without the circle of nobility was held to be mob; and at most a sort of half-recognition was now and then extended as a favour to the professors, though never so far as to admit them with their wives to the houses of the aristocracy. The mass of burghers and the country people were inert, listless, and stolid, and their dull faint-heartedness was frightened as soon as they caught themselves but grumbling at a tax — their only idea of the State; but in Mayence itself there were a few citizens whose Rhenish light-mindedness had been unwittingly rapt by the political freethinking of the professors. These latter were, indeed, a body by themselves, whose opinions, probably whetted by daily grinding against the world around, were so wholly at variance with its whole creed that in their compactness they looked like a set of pioneers thrust forward into the enemy's country in advance of the coming revolution. This circle was the only one which offered Forster any chance of society. The old Jesuit party, which had already declaimed often against the Protestant Johannes von Müller, looked with no friendly eyes on the new librarian; and such was the bigoted feeling fomented against everything that came from him that his bare proposal to sell the duplicate copies of books was met by the cry that desecration was

GEORGE FORSTER

threatening the work of the fathers, every single book gathered by whom deserved being treasured as a relique. In truth, as far as public enterprise was concerned, there was nothing gained by change from Poland; for the Elector and his court, like a host of locusts, ate up the wealth of the land in their lavish luxury, while the jealous ill will of the Jesuit swarms stifled every undertaking which smacked of enlightenment or free thought. Mayence, therefore, had no resources beyond the society of a few friends, foremost amongst whom was Sömmering, and its position in the heart of Germany. The neighbourhood of Dusseldorf reawakened the intimacy with Jacobi, which had slacked in distant Poland, while the literary activity of Heyne spurred Forster to share it by becoming a regular contributor to the *Göttingen Advertiser*, and the kindly old man's fatherly love filled that gap in his heart which had been made by his wilful sire's estrangement. How this last came about is not plainly stated: occasional letters passed between them from time to time, and those of the son are marked by the most reverential respect; but time and distance had accomplished a work which it is wonderful that so headstrong a temper had not brought about long ago.

The family ghost, poverty, showed itself in the household as soon as its tent had been pitched on the banks of the Rhine. Although he had been urged by the Elector to give lessons in natural history, the best of reasons stayed his doing so — for no pupils were to be found; and his duties as librarian were easy, since the fifteen thousand works which formed the boasted fifty thousand

GEORGE FORSTER

volumes of the library were stowed away in a lumber-room beyond reach or use. Thus he found his literary activity arrested at every turn by an impassable slough of sluggishness; and as his desultory writings barely sufficed to enable him to live from hand to mouth, his mind reverted to his favourite plan of a history of the geographical discoveries in the Southern Seas, and a flora of its islands; when, as no German publisher could defray such an undertaking, he turned his thoughts to England. His old claim on the Admiralty presented itself as an incentive to a plan, the travel of which already allured his roving turn; and so, having obtained three months' leave of absence, he started, in the end of March, 1790, with Alexander von Humboldt, on a trip, in the course of which they passed through Brabant to England, and on their way home took a hasty look at Paris, then in the glory of its new-won freedom. It is an interesting connection which thus brings together the famed explorer Forster, in the evening of his renown as traveller, with the youth of that man who was to carry out scientific journeying and research to the furthest limit that has yet been reached by one man; and thus what seemed to the partakers thereof but the heedless chatting of a pleasure trip takes for us the look of world-important intercommunings between two souls, the burthen of which yet rings in our ears through the clear-spoken words of the aged seer. A private pupil — a certain Mr. Thomas Brand — was the only pecuniary advantage brought by the journey, beyond a crowd of vivid impressions; for he had seen the two chief events on which the attention of Europe was fastened.

GEORGE FORSTER

In England he had attended Warren Hastings's trial, where he had heard and beheld all the oratory and the genius of the country; while in Paris he had looked on the pageantry of its strange liberty, in the enthusiastic preparations for the great feast of the Champs de Mars. The result he gave to the world in his "Views of the Rhine and Brabant"; a work which, written in the gloomiest period of his life, is a masterpiece of racy writing, as regards clearness of wording as well as the ease with which an array of deep thought is marshalled. "I tell you I hold your 'Views' to be one of the best books in our language" is the opinion pronounced by Lichtenberg.

Forster's household had been hitherto his stronghold, wherein he defied all evil chances; but now this also began to fail him. The story is a strangely painful one, and of such woven intricacy as to be almost beyond unravelling, for never was there any show of strife; and this not from a cloaking guardedly worn against the world's insight, because, wondrously enough, the tightest friendship and esteem continued between husband and wife, when, by the flight of that happy contentment which springs from love, the once cheerful homestead had been left bare and lonely. The truth seems that the warmth of Forster's temper, which had never known the sprightliness of boyhood, was mellowed to an even glow, less fitted for love's frenzy than for steady friendship, against which the fluttering heart of the woman mauled itself as a bird against its cage's bar, until, all forlorn, and innerly bruised and bleeding, the kindly nursing bestowed by a chance passer-by was taken with thankful-

GEORGE FORSTER

ness. That passer-by was ready at hand in Huber, Secretary to the Saxon Mission, a slim, simpering, scrofulous fellow, whose rather petty powers of mind were akin to his body's slightness; a man, the intertwinings of whose life with that of Forster, and the upshot thereof, remind one how, as well as the eagle, the reptile by crawling reaches the pyramid's summit. With the feverish trembling of sickly nervousness he tells us himself that he always felt the want of something to close his day, "so that on going to bed the last sounds might not be wanting to him as in unfinished accords." Possessed of that painful perseverance which is often found in small minds, he had wormed himself into the intimacy of Forster's home by dint of painstaking; and so anxious had he been for this acquaintance, especially for that of the wife, from the accounts he had heard of her, that, having learnt to know George on his first visit to Mayence, his nervous impatience drove him to meet him at Frankfort on his coming with his wife; and in a letter which marks the sickly anxiety with which he watched himself, he tells his delight that the interview went off well, "because desire to please strangers often gave his bearing something wavering and unsteady." So insignificant a man would never have enthralled the love of a spirited woman like Theresa, had not her loneliness made her feel herself drawn towards one who wholly merged his existence and feelings in her. There was no forethought on the part of any one in this business. Forster's large soul knew not what was meant by jealousy; and, moreover, in accordance with his own and his age's philosophy, he favoured close friendships as a

GEORGE FORSTER

duty, so that when the cautious Sömmering, before his marriage, once expressed some dislike of a freedom in Theresa's bearing towards men, he answered that every sympathetic quickening of her heart gave him pleasure, and that he felt himself happy every time she heartily loved some one whom he believed to be good and noble. "I hate everything which bars freedom, everything which hinders a seed or bud from sprouting," are his words in an early letter to her. His honest soul, all glowing with fellow-feeling and steady devotion, had no inkling how such thoughts might get twisted by others; for his own healthy being was free from any sickly taint.

The household straits, together with Forster's overwrought reserve about them, daily brought fresh worries, more and more inflaming a covert misunderstanding, which found its chief food in that very silence beneath which it was foolishly thought to stifle its quickenings. Huber appeared, on the occasion of these embarrassments, as the beam that propped the tumbling homestead; for while his simpering feeling had a charm for Theresa under the circumstances of her situation, he not only actually helped Forster in the toils of translation, but, from his many connections with leading publishers and literary journals, was enabled to be in many ways of real service to him. It was, therefore, in that state of inner strife which is brought about by want of happiness that during her husband's absence the wife was, as it were, thrust to rest herself in Huber, who naturally redoubled his nursing care, sanctioned, as it was, by Forster's knowledge thereof; while, on the other hand, Theresa's undisturbed attention fastened itself more and

GEORGE FORSTER

more on his devotion until it came out to her sight in striking relief against the dim canvas of household disappointment. Thus Forster returned from England after failure in his hopes, while the irresistible temptations of books and charts had largely added to the heavy outlay of his journey, to find that he had lost the greatest blessing of his life, — the peace of a loving home. His exceeding delicacy probably never allowed him to broach his knowledge of his loss to his wife, but henceforth regarded carefully maintained the chastity of a bond which hitherto had been the happy delight of love. Probably, had Sömmering been at a distance, the facts of this strange misunderstanding would be somewhat laid bare in the letters that then would have passed between the two; but as it is, there is nothing in the affectionate correspondence with Heyne which hints that the father had the least inkling of his children's unhappiness. Forster shrouded the barrenness of his home from every one, fighting, with a brave heart, the throng of his painful disappointments and the ever-growing load of poverty and debt. Once only, in a letter to Jacobi, after speaking of efforts to obtain relief from his embarrassments, he added: —

“Call it weakness, or an insurmountable artlessness, that I could not break myself from some expressions which have caused you anxiety — or, as it is better to touch *all* the chords of my heart, which set it a-going, excuse the sallies of peevishness, spleen, and sadness therewith, that I have moments when *another* sort of misfortune lets me feel still more deeply the oppressiveness of my circumstances.”

GEORGE FORSTER

Happiness had gone from him ; yet in the midst of his sad loneliness, how deeply touching is it to see the thoughtful care for the peace of mind of those about him, which is revealed by the following prayer in another letter to Jacobi, wherein he had been dwelling on his gloomy prospects : —

“One thing I beg of you, if you touch on this point in your letter, then do so on a separate bit of paper. Whatever I have to suffer, I like to suffer alone ; and as your dear letters are that which we all love to snatch at, I could wish that no one who is dear to me but myself should find anything in them which might cause anxiety and pain.”

The household was not the only thing which had changed : time had borne Mayence itself along with it. The great world-drama in France was progressing in its mighty working ; and all Europe was watching it, some with hearty sympathy, others with hatred and fear. The Elector and his pampered courtiers, too rotten at heart to be quickened into a manly outburst of hate, kept shooting from over their cups a shower of wit-bolts at King Mob. Soon a throng of noble exiles began to crowd the neighbourhood of the Rhine, who loved rather to eat goodly messes in other men’s homes than to try to save their own ; and great was the soul’s delight of the Electoral court that chance should allow them to fawn in daily intimacy on so high and illustrious a brood. The town and country were literally overrun by boastful runaways, in pandering to whose whims it was felt to be an honour to squander the exchequer ; and the general ill will at these newcomers, which was powerfully fo-

GEORGE FORSTER

mented in the first instance by the dearness of food, was heightened into exasperation by the swaggering effrontery of their behaviour. While every branch of the administration was neglected and its hardworking servants were being starved, every fund and resource of the country was drained to its uttermost farthing that the Electoral court might not be stinted in its pomp. The Prince de Condé was splendidly lodged, with his mistress, the Princesse de Monaco, in the Episcopal Palace of Worms, which belonged to the Elector; and on Comte d'Artois' visit to Mayence, his private household was defrayed by the impoverished principality at a daily cost of two hundred pounds. Wherever money could be found, it was laid hold of by the clutches of the pilfering court; and thus about a million of florins, which belonged to the university, out of the sale of church lands, were swallowed up in gormandizing and riot. Nor did the Elector even reap hearty thankfulness from the beggars whom he was thus stripping himself bare to clothe and feed; for while in public they showered on him the titles of father and protector till they made the dulled blood of his head tingle with delight, as soon as his back was turned the graceless crew would nickname him Sir Upstart, and Monsieur l'Abbé de Mayence. Meanwhile the tide of German politics was rising, and rapidly bearing away the little princes who were unguardedly disporting themselves in its heavy swell. There was a mighty plotting of statecraft going on between Austria and Prussia; and the Elector of Mayence was puffed up and full of importance, for he had been admitted to look on in that innermost closet where the secretest designs

GEORGE FORSTER

were being concocted by wily heads, too glad to buy with a little flattery a cat's-paw willing to pick for them the burning brands out of the fire. As he found his old ministers too awkward to handle such nice devices, he procured from Vienna Baron Albin as a master in statesmanship, and bestowing on him the title of Grand Chancellor, with a salary befitting his high dignity, he trustfully had himself launched, under his steering, upon the sea of political machination. The first fruits of such superior guidance was the glorious honour of holding Liège at a cost of three millions of florins, as a conqueror, with the Mayence army, as soon as the two heads of the Empire decided that German troops should quash the revolutionary movement in that bishopric. This army was of a piece with the whole fabric of the State; for while it barely counted three thousand ill-appointed and worse-fed soldiers, its army list counted no less than twelve noble and richly paid generals. But when the coronation of the new Emperor Francis had come off at Frankfort, which the Elector, of course, attended with the pomp and state befitting his high rank, then it was that the flock of princely brains there assembled and labouring in the birth-throes of subtlest State thought, accepted the invitation to the hospitable retreat of Mayence as best suited to their deep counsellings; and its sovereign gloated with delight at seeing himself the pivot around which the princes of Europe moved. Never had anything been beheld like the endless changes of dazzling revelry which followed on each other during the stay of princes and statesmen, so that it was a wonder at what time they snatched bare minutes for

GEORGE FORSTER

those cunning designs which it was whispered were being woven in a poor hut, away from din and distraction, on the shrouded islet of Weissanau. At last the high-born wiseacres were delivered, and the printing-presses of the court published the Duke of Brunswick's famous manifesto. "These are the men whose measures one is told to approve of," Forster exclaimed. "That man is happy who has found a nook whence he can quietly look on the mad turmoil."

The French Revolution could not otherwise than powerfully interest one who was so alive to the welfare and doings of his fellow beings. His letters to Heyne show how closely he watched its course, and that, keenly aware of its blemishes, he yet ever felt such sympathy for its struggles that he would become quite enraged at the fashion of overlooking its world-meaning in the flippant judgement currently passed upon it after flurried glances at some of its wild incidents. So, on the occasion of a book full of abuse of everything connected with France, he exclaimed:—

"Mr. Girtaner is impassioned for the old system, because under the new constitution he received sundry digs between the ribs on the 14th of July, in the Champs de Mars. Who taught him the wrong conclusion that a democratic crowd is not just the same sort of crowd as any other? Had he stood on the scaffolding which fell in on the occasion of the rejoicings of the Dauphin's birth, and had he sprained his toe or finger, he would have written an apology of regicide."

Injustice and selfishness were things so hateful to him that his soul could never desist from battling against

GEORGE FORSTER

them; and the daily sights and haps of his Mayence life were such as to be always stirring up his otherwise peace-loving heart. Not that he was minded to preach overthrow and change in Germany; over and over again he utters his belief, in letters, that public feeling and enlightenment were yet a century or two behind a want of political freedom, so that he bewails the blindness of princes, who, by wilful goadings, hasten an unseasonable discharge of ill humours, which thus must burst forth with the acrid pungency of unripeness. Heyne, whose thoroughly humane feeling was being constantly shocked by the wanton temper of German aristocracy, but whose character partook of a certain painful caution, kept hovering about his outspoken son-in-law with timid hints and prudent counsels. It is amusing to see how the old man is surprised into expressing his heart's joy at every fine burst of public feeling in France; and how again, in his next letter, frightened at his own daring, he pours out a string of saws meant to quench the fire of revolutionary enthusiasm. Already, while Forster was writing his "Views," Heyne had given vent to his fears as to how he would treat the political and religious considerations which would be suggested by the events of the countries he described, and Forster had felt so discouraged by his exceeding timidity that he had given himself much trouble to explain away the meaning of his warnings. Soon after this, however, he was thrown into a mightier fit of alarm on hearing that his son-in-law was translating a work of Brissot's, of which he had written a review for the *Göttingen Advertiser*, in language which had at-

GEORGE FORSTER

tracted such attention that the name of its author had been repeatedly asked. In the trouble of his mind he posted off a letter of earnest warning as to the consequences likely to ensue from so rash an undertaking, when Forster answered as follows:—

“I am not translating Brissot, and never thought of doing so. There is as much aristocratizing going on in my house as there is spoken on the other side; and as for myself, I certainly belong as little to the *enragés* of the one party as of the other. It is this very fairness which is hateful to all the fools and rogues who have espoused a party. . . . How should I tumble on the thought of wishing to preach an overthrow which I myself do not desire, but rather hold to be so great a mishap for Germany that I make every effort to ward it off, and on this account chiefly blame all the lying reviewers, who only embitter the public by their partiality, inasmuch as they give themselves the appearance as if it must needs trust them on their word. . . . I can remain silent, but I cannot write against my insight and conviction.”

While such feelings animated him with regard to the great movement going on everywhere around, his own private circumstances were getting more and more engulfed in gloom. His courage bore gallantly up against his adversity as long as health lasted; for in the end of 1790 he wrote that he felt the courage of a lion in him. His literary labours at this period brought his latterly somewhat forgotten name with fresh vividness to the memory of the general public. Besides his “Views,” which he wrote in such sunny moments as he could

GEORGE FORSTER

snatch, he translated the Sanscrit drama "Sacontala" from Sir W. Jones's English version. This glowing flower picked from the tropical garden of Indian poetry excited such intense interest in Germany that Goethe, in an epigram, styled it the embodiment of all beauty. All this was, however, far from enough to shield him from the embarrassments which kept tormenting him from without, while at home there was cold comfort; to all which trouble there came besides the rack and wear of bodily sickness, and at last the sorrow of losing his youngest child, a boy to whose growth and training he had fondly looked forward. "The whole year through I have ceaselessly worked with iron application and great strain of mind. My powers are worn out, my body is incapable of any more exertion, my mind is palsied, and I have the gloomiest prospect before me for the winter and coming year. It is as if all my hopes should run to water, — nothing succeeds; the more I work, the more I hope to earn, so much the more do things come to nought in my hands; and now I stand empty-handed, unable to work as hitherto, and yet in a position that I cannot make the two ends meet in my housekeeping without a continuation of my former application." In vain he would recur to his proposed work on the "Botany of the South Sea," for which, when last in England, he had launched into the outlay of having the drawings coloured by skilled artists: there was no one who would pay for the work. "I could find a publisher in Germany, but none would pay me. Fruitlessly do I look about me for a Mæcenas amongst our magnates and princes, who

GEORGE FORSTER

would pay with a couple of hundred louis for being paraded in a dedication as the protector of the work, and becoming immortal in the world of science." Soon after these sad bewailings, in a letter written late in 1791, it was the mockery of his lot that just when they were too late, two chances were thrown to him which a little earlier might have proved the cables of his rescue from shipwreck. Prospects of enlarged activity were opened to him in Mayence by the sudden decision of the Elector to assign the Jesuit church to the library, while on the death of the professor of natural history his salary was added to Forster's pay. On the other hand, a man of the highest understanding and name unexpectedly put himself in friendly communication with him. Among his literary jobs, he had received from the well-known Berlin publisher Voss the commission to write an account of the events of 1790, with an especial view to the part played in them by the Prussian statesman, Herzberg, between whom and Pitt he wished a parallel to be drawn. Herzberg, the old minister of Frederick the Great, and at that moment pretty much out of favour at the court of his successor, felt himself too much interested in this work not to wish that an account bearing the name of such an author and publisher should be trustworthy. He wrote Forster a letter, marked by honourable esteem, in which, after sending him some printed documents, he offered, if the manuscript were communicated to him, to look through it, and see that its statements were historically true, "as the King had positively forbidden him to make known a collection of State Papers he had pre-

GEORGE FORSTER

pared, and which would have thrown much light on these events." Forster thankfully accepted the offer; and Herzberg expressed himself highly satisfied with his exposition of his ministry. Before this business had, however, gone thus far, Mayence had been occupied by the French, and Forster had embarked in the new state vessel, as he thought, beyond possibility of an honourable return. Herzberg wrote him, through Voss, a letter in which he expressed his hope that Forster would continue a well-intentioned Prussian, and accompanied it not only with a batch of books having reference to the history of the said times, but also with the silver medal of the Berlin Academy (of which Forster was a member and Herzberg curator), and sent him a considerable sum of money. It is plain that the statesman, who knew of Forster's embarrassed circumstances, thought that he might by these means save a man, whose worth and abilities he had learnt to know, from following a path which he believed would lead to his destruction. Forster thought he saw an attempt at bribery, and wrote the following answer, at a time when he was smarting under the direst want:—

"If I understand aright the wish that I should remain a good Prussian, it is a suggestion wholly incompatible with my principles, and with that love of freedom spoken out in so many of my writings, although certainly with some caution, because of despotism. I was born in Polish Prussia, an hour's distance from Danzig, and left my birthplace before it came under Prussian rule. Thus far, therefore, I am no Prussian subject. I have lived as a man of science in England,

GEORGE FORSTER

have made a voyage round the world, and, furthermore, have tried to impart my poor knowledge at Cassel, Wilna, and Mayence. Throughout my life I have always tried to be a good citizen; and wherever I was, I worked for the bread I received. *Ubi bene ibi patria* must remain the motto of the man of science; and it must also remain that of the free man, who must meanwhile live isolated in lands which have no constitution. If to be a good Prussian means as much as when one is in Mayence, under French lordship, to wish for a speedy peace and recovery from all the ills of war, then I am a good Prussian as I am a good Turk, Chinese, Moor; but if it means that I am to deny in Mayence my well-known principles, — that I should not rejoice at its having a free constitution, — that, being called upon, I should not help to work for it, — that, in a time of fermentation and crisis, when one must absolutely take a decision, I should either remain undecided or should try to talk over the people of Mayence, that they had better keep their old outrages than be free with the French, — if then to be a good Prussian, means to take principles which never were mine, and which are, not to keep in view the weal of the inhabitants of Prussia, but the weal of the Cabinet, the Court, the ghost-seers of Mayence, then one asks me to do something for which I should deserve to be strung up on the next lamp-post. You will understand now that it is my most pressing duty wholly to renounce the offered advances of money — although I never was so poor as now, and have become poorer through disappointed hopes. I would rather that every wretchedness

GEORGE FORSTER

came over me than that I should become untrue to my principles. How could I take, under such circumstances, an advance of . . . dollars, when I would scorn half a million as a bribe?"

Yet had Herzberg only known Forster some few months earlier, and had he by such means entered that sphere of business and historical writing into which he only got this late peep, how different might his end have been! The throng of princes and statesmen had left Mayence behind them in the progress of their crusade; and the sultriness of suspense had followed on riotous revelry; for the nobility was daily awaiting tidings how the revolutionary snake had been scotched by their lucky brethren who were happy partakers of the great royal pageant. As thus hope and good cheer were in the hearts of all the swarm, and their boastful trust knew no bounds, a fearful blow came upon their rejoicings. Custine had suddenly passed the Rhine at Spiers, and was in full march on Mayence, having thoroughly beaten the Electoral troops under Colonel Winkelmann, an officer of such excellent sentiments that the bare words of freedom and the rights of man were enough to send him into a fit of raving. It was as if a pack of wild beasts had been suddenly let loose on a tea-party; the whole nobility of Mayence thought of nothing but to snatch up as much of their wealth as they could carry, and betake themselves with it beyond the Rhine. It was an endless bustle and trooping by day and night across the bridge and through the town gates: laden skiffs covered the river, and the roads were blocked with every sort of cart and wagon; while run-

GEORGE FORSTER

aways on foot and horse hurried along in selfish haste to their hiding-places, thoughtless of all but their own safety. It is said that two hundred thousand florins were spent in means of transport out of the town in these few days. The Elector scurried into the town, to take a glimpse at it, but left it again, secretly, after dark, on the day of his arrival, in well-closed chariots, with his mistress and his jewels, having first seen that his arms were well erased from his carriage-panels, after which he bethought himself of duly naming Chancellor Albini as regent. The treasures of the churches were also packed up and got safely out of the town; and then the High Chancellor called the burghers (in truth, the only inhabitants who remained) to a meeting, at which he urged them not to lose courage, but, abiding by the town, to defend it to the last, and, addressing them as his brethren, read a proclamation forbidding flight and removal of goods on pain of severest punishment. The fraternal title, we are told, so dumfounded the burgher brains that a rough journeyman unwittingly gave vent to his astonishment by a thundering rap of his big fist on the table, accompanied by a monstrous oath; when, just as brotherly affection was about to make them all strike into that stream of bravery let loose by the Chancellor, an ill-timed meddler dashed this flow of mind by the shout that their most gracious brother, the Chancellor, in his heavily laden chariot, had just safely passed the gates. His Excellency General von Gymnich, Master-General of the Ordnance, swore loudly he would defend the town *to his last shirt*; and truly endless was the clatter and the

GEORGE FORSTER

bustle of warlike preparations during the next few days. The burgher guard were even under arms; all horses were put in requisition to drag artillery, and the full-dressed generals of the Mayence army inspected the raising of batteries by panting citizens, who were praying God to put a speedy end to such troubles before worse came of them. Now and then a bit of news would come how Custine had advanced another march; and once the sight of a cloud of dust sent such a thrill of fear through the town that the garrison nearly crushed itself to atoms in scampering across the bridge on the Rhine; until, on the nineteenth of October, the French arrived bodily under the walls of Mayence, and summoned the town to surrender, when General von Gymnich gathered his splendidly clad brother generals about him, amongst them the Elector's relative Count Hatzfeldt, to consider in council whether they should desert or defend the town. To desert was the decision they quickly came to; so, having bargained that each officer should be allowed to take away a horse out of the Elector's stable, while he himself received six famous cream-coloured steeds, His Excellency-in-Chief rode over to the opposite bank with the proud bearing of one who had worthily taken care of his master's dearest interests; and, having received each officer's pledge to restore his animal to its owner, he hastened to present himself, his horses, and his report, at Erfurt, whither his sovereign had retired.

It was no wish to abet French conquest which made Forster remain in Mayence. His post was there; the world without was all strange to him, and offered him

GEORGE FORSTER

no home which he could make for in these troubles; and while his duty and his interests both told him to stay, his generous mind was, moreover, deeply shocked at the selfishness of the higher classes, and of every one connected with the Government. The very last act of the Elector was to pilfer and bear away with him the saving fund of widows and orphans, so that Forster could well exclaim, "The last quivering of despotism is one more piece of unrighteousness, which calls to Heaven for vengeance." He determined, therefore, to abide events, — a resolve in which he was strengthened at the time by Theresa's good cheer and encouragement. So active a mind, with its love of practical employment, could not, however, remain long without being drawn into the eddy which was spinning around him; and thus his great knowledge of French made him the university's natural spokesman with Custine, on the occasion of its being threatened with loss of funds by new decrees concerning tithes and dues. In those days events marched rapidly; and while the memory of the Elector, in his distant retirement, or from the selfish abandonment of everything by him and his own, had faded in a few weeks as if years had elapsed since his departure (so that all believed, come what might, the old Government at least could not return), every day brought with it new situations, which not only loudly called on a man of Forster's knowledge and parts to seize as a duty the occasion thrust on him of warding ill from off his fellow citizens, but which often, from the nature of their complications and his peculiar position, pointed him out as the man who could alone

GEORGE FORSTER

unravel and straighten them. Thus, from being his fellow professors' champion for their dues and rights, he came to have to do with the equitable allotment of the demands of the French Commissariat, until step by step he was drawn into being the heart and soul of the new administration, and, on the appointment of a provisional government, allowed himself to be named one of its nine members. His motives are manfully stated in a letter to Heyne, whose fears at his son-in-law's conduct were becoming excessive.

"It is the duty of every honest inhabitant, I think, to take thought, when called upon to do so, for the ease and property of the inhabitants in general; for, let Mayence come into whose hands it may, it must always be pleasing to the sovereign of the day to have a country which is not exhausted, and which is in the enjoyment of its resources. I have no other principle of action, and this one is as simple as it is true. No one will deny that if the people of Mayence can become free on this occasion, they would be great fools not to become so, and they really seem possessed of enough sound sense to do it."

This step was final; it tore almost all his ties of friendship; and even Sömmering was so overcome with fear and horror that, turning away from one who loved him so dearly, he henceforth would have no further knowledge of him. Traitor and low designer were the names showered upon him; and the Duke of Brunswick's remark, on hearing of Forster's doings, was astonishment that one who had so many means of earning a livelihood should have sought a rebel's calling! Yet if

GEORGE FORSTER

Forster proved wrong in his political belief, he shared his mistake with many keen thinkers; for even the shrewd Johannes von Müller, initiated as he was into all the springs and workings of German statecraft, gave it as his opinion, on a hasty visit to Mayence for matters of private business (where he was beset by hundreds of doubtful burghers seeking to steady their minds by the wisdom of so deep an oracle), that under the circumstances they would do best to rally round the Republican Government. In the midst of the bustle of convening the assembly which was to decide whether Mayence would become independent or not, affairs without the walls grew dark and threatening.

The French had been driven back from Frankfort, and the allies were hovering about the town. Business now overwhelmed Forster; his fluent French made him necessary everywhere, and, after working all day in offices, he had to take the chair of an evening in the Jacobin Club, while the editorship of a journal left him not a spare moment to himself. It was in the turmoil of such troubled times, when every day the lookout became more and more threatening, that he determined Theresa should no longer encounter the risks of his lot. She had been entirely deprived of society by the universal emigration (Huber, as Saxon agent, had been forced to leave the town), and hardships which would formerly have excited her romantic temper now only tended to depress it; so it was decided that Thomas Brand, the English pupil, should take her to Strasburg, where she was to reside with good Jacobin friends of her husband. Thus was the knot of Forster's marriage

GEORGE FORSTER

noiselessly untied, although it is certain that neither husband nor wife was fully aware that they were then unloosening it so completely for ever. Much deep and earnest thought had Forster held within himself as to what it was his honest duty to do for his wife's happiness; that secret about Huber weighed upon him, in spite of his philosophy; yet, seeing himself and the ship of his household becoming more and more engulfed in an eddy, he wished to see his wife at least landed beyond its reach; and thus this severing was, in truth, a renunciation on his part. Huber soon after vowed that as long as he lived Theresa should never suffer want, and, forsaking his diplomatic calling, — advancement in which was barred by his well-known friendship for the Jacobins, — he went to Switzerland, whither she had gone from Strasburg with her children. Strange to say, a happier and a better understanding between all three was the immediate result of this unwonted settlement. Forster had lost much, but he had won a devoted friendship which, freed from the restraint of late doubt and fear, now revealed itself in its full strength; and his letters show how at this time, at least, it did not enter his thoughts that the new order of things would cut him off from personal intercourse with his wife; while she again manifests the liveliest sympathy and interest in his career, and fully approves of his pursuing it. In truth, this is one of the most wonderful complications woven out of the smallest and pitiablest misunderstandings with the highest and noblest self-denial, so that it passes comprehension how they could be dovetailed together; and not least strange is the artless bearing and

GEORGE FORSTER

true childlike affection shown by all the sharers in this odd union.

It was time for women to get out of Mayence when Theresa left. Merlin de Thionsville, Haussmann, and Rewbell arrived from Paris, as commissioners, when all doubt as to the future constitution of the country was laid aside. Endless was now the racket of Forster's daily life; and especially was he worried by the labour of presiding at the club sittings, which were violently disturbed by unseemly brawls. Then were there also patriotic banquets, followed by long-winded orations, so that he might well groan over the part he was made to go through; yet his health was wonderfully borne up by excitement, until a four hours' bath of snow and sleet, on the solemn planting of the tree of freedom on the fourth of January, nearly ended the patriot's days. The loss of so useful a man was borne impatiently; so no sooner was he able to move than he was made to travel through the country districts, as Government Commissioner, to watch the elections of deputies for the Constituent Assembly of Mayence, — an office which brought him into collision with the nobles on their estates. The Union was voted at once, when Forster, with two other citizens, was sent to bear to the Convention the decree which he himself had drawn up. So little did he foresee, in the eagerness of that hour, how events were upon the point of turning, that he expected to be back before the end of three weeks, and even neglected to take any care for his books and papers. On the thirtieth of March, he was admitted to the bar of the Convention, where he was received with the en-

GEORGE FORSTER

thusiastic cheers of that France to which he was sent as the spokesman of its new brethren, although one short week was sufficient to prove how unstable and tottering was the Union he heralded.

The allied armies had crossed the Rhine the day before Forster's departure, and since then had advanced upon the town, so as to invest it completely. Under such circumstances, return was for the present out of the question; so to shift for himself as he best could in the heaving surf of Paris, on the pittance of eighteen assignat livres a day, was all the lookout left to him, and he tried to make it as cheery a one as good will would allow. A large world suited Forster's temper; the many shiftings of his early life had given him habits of largeness, and there was in the nature of Paris and its world-movement abundance to fasten and powerfully interest the peculiar tastes of his mind. Moreover, he came thither with a lively trust and belief in the great Revolution, which the excitement of partisanship had worked up into passionate liking; and yet the first impression of what he saw, when he began to sift and order the crush of sight which thronged on him, was disappointment, which, in spite of himself, stole with clammy chill over his boiling enthusiasm. He saw the ugly underworkings of parties and of party chiefs, and his gossamer visions threatened absolutely to fade away at the strong glare of Paris light. "The only thing still wanting, after all I have suffered of late, is to have the conviction forced on me, that I have offered up my best strength to a monster, and have worked with honest zeal for a cause with which no one else will work honestly, and which is a cloak for the

GEORGE FORSTER

maddest passions." Forster's political faith, and keen glance into the workings of men and times, were, however, far too steady to be shaken or blinded by any sudden gust. He had become enamoured of the Revolution for herself; and through the throng of low suitors who had jostled and dragged her along into the filth of their debaucheries, his eye, disregarding the harlotry of foisted fashion, dwelt ever lovingly on the beauty with which she had been born. Thus, while goaded to despair by the excesses and horrors of the violent party, he yet proclaimed himself a Jacobin, because he saw in extreme measures the State's only safeguard against a return of old abuses. "I do not deny that the men of the Mountain often show themselves from a disadvantageous and impolitic side; but they seem withal to be freer from prejudice than the others, and, beyond doubt, they have more power and decision." Thus Forster remained true to his convictions, — for with him they were the clear light of belief, which no chance storm could lastingly trouble, for he knew that, in the heaven of his world, certain seasons must have passing storms, and that the big darkness was but the shadow which must come along with the mighty lightning that would clear the firmament.

Eighteen paper livres a day (of which a hundred went to make one gold louis) were slender rations to fatten on, especially for a man who found himself unable to pick up any scrap of means for himself, being yet so thorough a stranger in the wild chaos he had got into that, in spite of all his efforts, he could pitch on no standing-ground whatsoever in its rocking whirligig. Affairs in Mayence grew daily worse; for not only were

GEORGE FORSTER

a hundred ducats put upon his outlawed head, about which he could afford to joke from his Paris garret, but, what was infinitely more alarming, a thorough rain of shells and cannon-balls had been hurled upon the town, great part of which, and especially of his own neighbourhood, had been burned; while, even if his house escaped destruction, there was small chance that he would be able to recover his papers, which he had so thoughtlessly forgotten to stow away. Without his papers he was like a palsied man pilfered of his crutches; for his hopes of active employment in the service of France did not wear a promising look. All France was then bustling about Paris and the office haunts of the ministers; and unless a man had big shoulders, and a strong will to make others afraid of him, there was small likelihood for his luck in picking up anything. Lebrun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, had indeed received him in a friendly manner, and he had the justest claims on the State for whose benefit he had risked and lost his all; yet, if such hopes were worth aught, their value was as yet to come, and so far not even in sight.

“After so many years’ hard work, everything which I have undertaken for my advancement has failed, and I begin the world, as it were, afresh, without knowing how or wherewith, as cut off from all Europe and overladen with debt. I am here without means, without any support, and almost without prospects. I have pledged myself to accept everything which may be offered to me. Scientific merit, and even the skill of the man of business, are now of no avail here. Whoever floats uppermost sits at the helm, until the next man, being the strongest

GEORGE FORSTER

for the moment, dislodges him. In short, for the first time in my life, all my means prove utterly useless; and I stand as forlorn as a child which has not the strength to nourish itself."

This dreary view of his circumstances did not, however, long cast down his spirits. Summer always invigorated Forster; it was as if this season ever quickened the throb of his tropical heart; and so, as it came on, his courage began to plan designs which smacked of its temper and his roving disposition. He thought of studying Eastern languages, and of going to India for some years.

"If I could only scrape together £400 or £500, and were it only £300, I would learn Persian and Arabic, and go overland to India to gather new experience, and besides make my fortune as a physician in a few years. Wholly new objects, foreign sights, movement, occupation, discomfort, and even danger, — all this together, with the consciousness that I am busy in the enjoyment and pursuit of such human work as suits my powers, knowledge, and taste, must infallibly prove healing balm to my wounded feelings. I might stay away from four to six years, or still longer, and then return not yet too old to enjoy the end of my days in my children's arms; while, finding them happy, I should bring back to you a friend thankful for the fulfilment of your motherly duties."

Is not this the same old Forster, — good, generous, and never allowing himself to be long downcast? This last-spoken hope of seeing his wife and children remained bright through all his summer visions, although resigna-

GEORGE FORSTER

tion had been steadily growing on him, so that he saw now clearly enough that it would not do for him to live in the neighbourhood of Theresa, and any longings for such a life passed only like the death-quivers of his lone existence. The intimacy of their correspondence was extreme; it was a continual outpouring of friendliest love and sympathy, and he seemed but to feel the pains of his straitened circumstances in the palsy they brought on that helping hand he was always wishing to thrust to those he was so fond of. Even in his uttermost poverty he screwed together a little money for some present when a trusty opportunity of sending it offered; and the only occasion when his letters showed any displeasure with his wife was when she chanced to lag behind his zeal and faith in the Revolution.

At times Lebrun threw out a sign which buoyed up his hope, and made him look nearer home than India for a beam whereon to float from drowning; until at last, in October, he really was named a French envoy, and was sent to Cambrai to negotiate an exchange of prisoners with the allied generals. On the very day of his appointment the Angel of Blood had passed close by him with his sword. Lux, one of his two fellow deputies from Mayence, and who had been the comrade of all his Paris penury, had been arrested that morning to be dragged before the Revolutionary tribunal. The poor youth, crazed with admiration of Charlotte Corday's heroism, had loudly said that he would hold it as his highest honour to be doomed to share her death, and wrote an apotheosis of her, in which he proposed that a statue should be erected to her as greater than Brutus.

GEORGE FORSTER

Nor was the mission itself a pleasant and comfortable thing, whatever visions friends abroad made to themselves of Forster's mightiness; in truth, the Republican Envoy was woefully off in every way, worried by the dullest of business, which during three months he in vain tried to see make some progress, without a friend or an amusement to cheer weary days, while he ruefully shivered in a reeking garret (and even there in his wretched bed he was robbed of comfort by hosts of vermin), for the measure of wood cost one hundred and twenty livres, and, as he says himself, "he did not understand the art of swelling his income of three thousand into forty thousand livres." Still this mission may well be put down amongst the lucky windfalls of his life; for at this time Paris was at the highest pitch of its mistrust of foreigners, and but for his absence, Forster would hardly have escaped suspicion, with his open, outspoken honesty and his intimate connection with poor Lux, who, when brought before the tribunal and in prison, bore himself like one rapt with frenzy, and at last leapt up the steps of the scaffold as lightly as if they led to a bridal chamber.

It is very noteworthy what calm, unruffled courage Forster shows during all these sad times; it is as if the thought of danger to himself never crossed him for an instant; and from his garret at Arras (whither the approach of the allies had driven him rather hastily from Cambrai), as from the heart of Paris, he looks unflinchingly on the terrible things going on around him, and passes his judgement as quietly and unguardedly on men and matters as if he himself were wholly beyond

GEORGE FORSTER

their power and reach. There is literally not one word in his correspondence which betrays the thought that he might be drawn down by the wild eddy he was so close to. The only uneasiness which worried him was the uncertainty of his prospects, by which he found himself kept in continued fever; for while he saw that his foreign origin and sturdy independence were stumbling-blocks in the way of employment, the absence of his papers and books rendered him unable to undertake any literary labour. Yet with all this his brave spirit was not abashed; and indeed at this period of his life he seemed to have been animated with unwonted courage. In the outer world there was only one spot for him where he hoped to find soothing comfort; and daily, on returning from long, lonely walks along the poplar-edged canals of Flanders, his mind spinning with schemes for the future, the perusal of Theresa's letters, or chafing disappointment when his expectation of such was balked, made him turn with impassioned longing to the thought of once more seeing her and his children. The difficulty was great; for even if he could find the requisite money, public mistrust was ever watching the goings and comings on the frontier, and Forster in his peculiar position could easily come to be denounced as a traitor who held intercourse with the enemy's spies. Theresa was staying at Neufchâtel, which, being under Prussian supremacy, was forbidden ground to the outlaw. Yet for her to come over into France was even more dangerous than for Forster to break the decree of the Convention, which forbade any one to cross the boundaries without the Government's express permission. The first petty police-

GEORGE FORSTER

officer might cheaply show his zeal by laying hold of her as a skulking emigrant; while Huber, as an enemy's subject, could never be admitted.

About the middle of October, being at last relieved from his diplomatic functions, Forster moved heaven and earth in Paris to be able to obtain his wishes. It was resolved that Theresa should come with Huber to Travers, a poor village in the Jura, a few miles from the French frontier, whither Forster was to cross from Pontarlier. He obtained a loan of one thousand livres from an old Mayence friend. He reckoned on his official character to overcome any difficulties on the frontier, while he hoped to shield himself against the penalty of death which was attached to the transport of coin out of the country by bringing back a paper in Huber's possession, which, written by Clermont Tonnerre, contained matters of high importance about General Luckner's supposed treason, and which, if subjected to inquiry, Forster would pretend to have been bought with the money he had, in truth, carried to his children. At last the arrangements were ready, and early in November he left Paris for Pontarlier. The chief of the frontier post proved a friendly man, who willingly agreed to help him as far as he could; so, riding across the snowy ridges of the Jura, he reached unobserved the appointed hamlet on a November morning. What passed between the three, — what overwhelming thoughts, what flashes of hope and pangs of disappointment, shot across their minds in those three days, when all the floodgates of their hearts were opened, and their fulness flowed so fast to choking, — there is no account; for how could any cun-

GEORGE FORSTER

ning words set forth such a throng of emotions? It is a meeting worth thinking about. Forster seemed to his friends to have grown stouter in health, and his complexion appeared to have a freshness, which was probably but the flush of joyous excitement, while he also expressed himself pleased with what he saw. Thus did these few days fly past but too swiftly in the enjoyment of the highest and most heartfelt bliss, and the three were again torn asunder so suddenly and so rapidly that all was like a dream, had not the tingling throbs of memory continued to heave and flush their frames.

"I thank Heaven," he writes, the day after the separation, "that I have carried out coming to you; these three days have strengthened me for a long while, and have perhaps poised me rightly for ever. I feel myself like Antæus, the son of Earth, who received new strength when he touched his mother. My courage to hold out is firmer and more decided, and my resignation (if I may so call it) to everything which may happen has now no struggle more to overcome. We could still be happy, and live with and near each other some twenty or thirty years. As for our starving, that is out of the question; and the more so if we are together, and restrict ourselves to that which is simply necessary. Would that be any suffering *for us*, especially after all we have experienced, seen, and heard, — after all that happens and takes place about us? I can reckon that I shall always have an income of six thousand livres; — could I only find four thousand for Huber, then I would pledge myself that we might live perfectly well in Paris. Why, it must go! Kiss my sweet children. How I scanned the mail-

GEORGE FORSTER

guard to-day who had seen them yesterday. Good-bye."

Poor Forster! who, reckoning on thirty years of happiness, had bare nine weeks of nether life allotted to him, and most of these to be passed in racking torments!

For a fortnight Forster still remained by himself at Pontarlier, — for what reason does not appear unless it were that he feared to leave the neighbourhood of those he loved until want of money drove him away. The journey was made in the wretchedest winter weather so that he reached Paris in sad plight, where he put up at the *Hôtel des Patriotes Hollandais*, in the *Rue des Moulins*. He had been attacked on the way with rheumatic spasms in the chest, which, however, yielded to remedies, and allowed him to run about Paris, where, as he wrote, he found not a few new things. Chebot and Bazire's imprisonment, which had just happened, were startling tidings even in those days; while Danton's mighty voice, after long silence, was beginning to let itself be heard again within the walls of the Convention. Poor Chamfort, the librarian, whom he had left dealing out books in the *Rue Richelieu*, was lying in the Luxembourg prison, being carefully nursed of his razor-gashes that he might be reserved for the guillotine, which, in the interval of his absence, had been at work on many known heads, — amongst them, Manuel and Bailly and Egalité. Careless exposure to wintry weather did him, however, fresh harm; for, on the eleventh of December, he had to write that for three days he had been obliged to keep his bed, but that things were mending, and before three other days were over he would

GEORGE FORSTER

be able to go out again as usual. His old disease, the scurvy, brought on, in the first instance, by the wet and cold he had encountered on his journey, had taken the shape of rheumatic gout, and was flying about his body, having been violently increased by his careless neglect of precautions. Still gradually he began to recover, though sleepless nights and exhausting torments required a longer convalescence than the three days he had been hopefully looking to as enough. With his inborn eagerness, at this time heightened by the lively spirit of enterprise which had come over him since his visit to Travers, he forthwith went out as soon as ever he could, in cold and bitter weather; and so, having visited some friends on the evening of the nineteenth of December, he found himself obliged to walk home late at night, as no carriage could be found. The consequence was an immediate and violent return of his malady. "I have fared ill in this undertaking. My chest became as sore and tired as if a scraper had been passed over it; and even now my whole inside is still one sore." Two days later, however, he already wrote a more hopeful account; for though so weak as to be unable to walk a hundred steps without violent coughing and faintness, while his joints were painfully swollen, yet he declared himself without fear of the consequences of his illness; and so duped were Theresa and Huber by the cheerful tone of his letters, that, accustomed, on the one hand, to know Forster continually ailing, while, on the other, trustful in the healthy look he had at Travers, they felt no serious alarm about his state. The improvement announced in every letter would

GEORGE FORSTER

not come. The gouty swellings spread more and more over the whole body, racking it with ceaseless torments, which baffled all soothing medicines, though they did not overcome his sturdy courage. On the fourth of January he wrote the following letter to Theresa: —

“But a few lines from my bed of pain, that my darlings be not without tidings. My sickness has now lasted thirteen days. I do not shut an eye, and until this night I have always had more or less violent pain. Now it seems to be venting itself, — the fourth day after two blisters. At the same time I have that fearful scorbutic flow of saliva which I had at Mayence when your father came to see us. Danger there is none. Strength exists still, although so lessened that my recovery will be slow. Believe me, that in the account of my sickness there is neither a word too much nor too little. The pains have left the stomach and bowels; they were the chief thing. You will understand that I can do no work. I can only save myself. I cannot continue this scrawl, — therefore, only be without anxiety. I beg of you, dear Huber, take care that our Theresa does not create herself any fancies. It is true that I am very and painfully ill; but once more — there is no danger. Your letters, my dear child, which I have all received, have been a dear gift to me in my illness; be sure to continue writing assiduously! We have everywhere been victorious like lions; the Frankfort call has been full of augury. I am curious to learn how public spirit will express itself on the other side of the Rhine, now that the truth of the news is undoubted. Is it not true, my children — a few words are better than no-

GEORGE FORSTER

thing? I have no more strength to write. Farewell! Guard yourselves against illness, — kiss my darlings."

It was the last letter ever written by George Forster; and with what a healthy flow of unaffected feeling does it teem, and how thoroughly warm and lively is his heart's throb to the last! He had a few friends who at first watched at his bedside; but, becoming tired with waiting for his death, they all of them forsook him, except one old messmate from Mayence. The gout by degrees conquered the body bit by bit, until at five o'clock in the afternoon of the twelfth of January, 1794, the brave soul breathed its last. The Mayence friend immediately informed Huber of what had happened in the following words:—

"My tears announce to you, dear friend, a melancholy event. Our poor Forster is dead; he died in his room an hour ago of apoplexy, after a long gouty illness. I rendered him the last duties of a friend, and closed his eyes. . . . Of the last hours of our poor dead friend I can, in truth, say nothing, but that the proverb proved itself true:—

*'Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos,
Tempora si fuerint nubila solus eris.'*

Ovid was quite right. In the last eight days, as Forster's illness became more serious, all his many friends—French, Germans, Poles—forsook him; I alone remained to succour him in his sufferings. I seldom left him; and on the day of his death I was with him till four in the afternoon. At that time his illness did not yet threaten death; business called me away, and when

GEORGE FORSTER

I returned at five in the evening, nature's struggle between existence and cessation had already begun, and my poor friend was at the point of death. The gout had got into the chest, an apoplectic stroke came thereto, and his last words were of his children. Quiverings snapped the fetters of life; his two watchmen and myself were present at his last breath, and I then immediately took care about the sealing-up of all he had left behind him, and the *procès verbal* which the *juge de paix* arranged."

Little indeed was it that he left behind him, for the journey to Travers had not yet been paid for; and even that little got frittered away by dishonest handling. An ex-count — at that time Citizen Joguet — thrust himself, with much show and bustle of friendship, on Theresa, and offered, by his influence and knowledge of Paris, to settle her husband's affairs, if she would furnish him with the authority to do so. What became of the man himself does not appear, beyond that he tried to turn to his own best possible advantage the trust which had been blindly reposed in his assurances. Theresa sent such of Forster's papers as he had with him in Paris, as a donation from his children to the Committee for Education, without ever receiving any acknowledgement, until many years later, a friend of the family found a bundle of old papers in the lumber-room of the National Institute, and on scrutiny it proved to be the remains of this donation, which figured as a patriotic gift of the said citizen. So forsaken was the end of one who had begun life so dazzlingly. Hardly a word was spoken about his death; and if so, then was

GEORGE FORSTER

it mostly a curse, for pity was barely dared to be whispered. Sömmering, peevish and fretting at the chattels he had lost during the Mayence outbreak, started back from the very name of Forster as from the Evil One. Lichtenberg timidly bewailed that his married state imposed caution, so that all he could afford to do for his friend's memory was to *think* freely of him. Jacobi's delicate nature did not mingle in the low choir of hooters, but still he stood silently aloof; and, most shocking of all, the old father at Halle, in the mad frenzy of hoary age, belched forth a yell of outrage against his George, to have seen whom swing on the gallows he declared would have been the closing pleasure of his life. One man alone dared to weep openly for him, and tenderly he wept over his loss, — kindly old Heyne, who, in the fulness of his honest heart, cast aside all his caution and regard for consequences, to let its sorrow pour itself forth.

“Since yesterday's news, which has altogether confounded me” (he wrote to Huber on the thirty-first of January), “I cannot collect my thoughts. I cannot console myself for the loss of my Forster. Truly was he *my Forster*, I loved him beyond expression; so many feelings were mingled in him. His worth — ah! he will never be replaced for the world. The knowledge that was gathered in him will not soon again be found in one man. The noblest nature — the noblest heart; and for me ever the object of sorrow, of pity. I always thought of him with emotion; he deserved to be happy more than thousand others, and yet was never so, — was so deeply unhappy! It is as yet impossible for me

GEORGE FORSTER

to think that I am never to see him again! I shall never be able to forget him; always will he float before my eyes, — thou noblest, best man! What would I give for one hour which I might have conversed with him! Rest in peace, my dear, my cherished Forster!”

The man who had borne the name of Germany all over the world, whose writings were amongst the masterpieces of its language, whose feelings were so true and whose thought so national that he first coined a thorough German word for public spirit (*Gemeingeist*), — that man's memory was tracked and hunted down as of the vilest traitor; so that, nearly forty years after his death, his wife did not dare to publish his letters without prefixing an apology. Four months after Forster's death Theresa and Huber were married, and the remainder of their lives was at least happy and contented.

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

SILLY Novels by Lady Novelists are a genus with many species, determined by the particular quality of silliness that predominates in them, — the frothy, the prosy, the pious, or the pedantic. But it is a mixture of all these, a composite order of feminine fatuity, that produces the largest class of such novels, which we shall distinguish as the *mind-and-millinery* species.) The heroine is usually an heiress, probably a peeress in her own right, with perhaps a vicious baronet, an amiable duke, and an irresistible younger son of a marquis as lovers in the foreground, a clergyman and a poet sighing for her in the middle distance, and a crowd of undefined adorers dimly indicated beyond. Her eyes and her wit are both dazzling; her nose and her morals are alike free from any tendency to irregularity; she has a superb contralto and a superb intellect; she is perfectly well dressed and perfectly religious; she dances like a sylph, and reads the Bible in the original tongues. Or it may be that the heroine is not an heiress, — that rank and wealth are the only things in which she is deficient; but she infallibly gets into high society, she has the triumph of refusing many matches and securing the best, and she wears some family jewels or other as a sort of crown of righteousness at the end. Rakish men either bite their lips in impotent confusion at her repartees, or are touched to penitence by her reproofs,

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

which, on appropriate occasions, rise to a lofty strain of rhetoric; indeed, there is a general propensity in her to make speeches, and to rhapsodize at some length when she retires to her bedroom. In her recorded conversations she is amazingly eloquent, and in her unrecorded conversations amazingly witty. She is understood to have a depth of insight that looks through and through the shallow theories of philosophers, and her superior instincts are a sort of dial by which men have only to set their clocks and watches, and all will go well. The men play a very subordinate part by her side. You are consoled now and then by a hint that they have affairs, which keeps you in mind that the working-day business of the world is somehow being carried on; but ostensibly the final cause of their existence is that they may accompany the heroine on her "starring" expedition through life. They see her at a ball, and are dazzled; at a flower-show, and they are fascinated; on a riding excursion, and they are witched by her noble horsemanship; at church, and they are awed by the sweet solemnity of her demeanour. She is the ideal woman in feelings, faculties, and flounces. For all this, she as often as not marries the wrong person to begin with, and she suffers terribly from the plots and intrigues of the vicious baronet; but even death has a soft place in his heart for such a paragon, and remedies all mistakes for her just at the right moment. The vicious baronet is sure to be killed in a duel, and the tedious husband dies in his bed, requesting his wife, as a particular favour to him, to marry the man she loves best, and having already dispatched a note to the lover in-

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

forming him of the comfortable arrangement. Before matters arrive at this desirable issue our feelings are tried by seeing the noble, lovely, and gifted heroine pass through many *mauvais moments*; but we have the satisfaction of knowing that her sorrows are wept into embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs, that her fainting form reclines on the very best upholstery, and that whatever vicissitudes she may undergo, from being dashed out of her carriage to having her head shaved in a fever, she comes out of them all with a complexion more blooming and locks more redundant than ever.

[We may remark, by the way, that we have been relieved from a serious scruple by discovering that silly novels by lady novelists rarely introduce us into any other than very lofty and fashionable society.] We had imagined that destitute women turned novelists, as they turned governesses, because they had no other “ladylike” means of getting their bread. On this supposition vacillating syntax and improbable incident had a certain pathos for us, like the extremely supererogatory pin-cushions and ill-devised nightcaps that are offered for sale by a blind man. We felt the commodity to be a nuisance, but we were glad to think that the money went to relieve the necessitous, and we pictured to ourselves lonely women struggling for a maintenance, or wives and daughters devoting themselves to the production of “copy” out of pure heroism, — perhaps to pay their husbands’ debts or to purchase luxuries for a sick father. Under these impressions we shrank from criticizing a lady’s novel: her English might be faulty but we said to ourselves her motives are irreproach-

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

able; her imagination may be uninventive, but her patience is untiring. Empty writing was excused by an empty stomach, and twaddle was consecrated by tears. But no! This theory of ours, like many other pretty theories, has had to give way before observation.

[Women's silly novels, we are now convinced, are written under totally different circumstances. The fair writers have evidently never talked to a tradesman except from a carriage window; they have no notion of the working-classes except as "dependants"; they think five hundred a year a miserable pittance; Belgravia and "baronial halls" are their primary truths; and they have no idea of feeling interest in any man who is not at least a great landed proprietor, if not a prime minister. It is clear that they write in elegant boudoirs, with violet-coloured ink and a ruby pen; that they must be entirely indifferent to publishers' accounts, and inexperienced in every form of poverty except poverty of brains.] It is true that we are constantly struck with the want of verisimilitude in their representations of the high society in which they seem to live; but then they betray no closer acquaintance with any other form of life. [If their peers and peeresses are improbable, their literary men, tradespeople, and cottagers are impossible; and their intellect seems to have the peculiar impartiality of reproducing both what they *have* seen and heard, and what they have *not* seen and heard, with equal unfaithfulness.]

There are few women, we suppose, who have not seen something of children under five years of age, yet in "Compensation," a recent novel of the mind-and-

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

millinery species, which calls itself a "story of real life," we have a child of four and a half years old talking in this Ossianic fashion:—

"“Oh, I am so happy, dear gran'mamma! I have seen — I have seen such a delightful person; he is like everything beautiful,—like the smell of sweet flowers, and the view from Ben Lomond;—or no, *better than that*,—he is like what I think of and see when I am very, very happy; and he is really like mamma, too, when she sings; and his forehead is like *that distant sea*,' she continued, pointing to the blue Mediterranean; 'there seems no end — no end; or like the clusters of stars I like best to look at on a warm fine night. . . . Don't look so. . . . Your forehead is like Loch Lomond, when the wind is blowing and the sun is gone in; I like the sunshine best when the lake is smooth. . . . So now — I like it better than ever . . . it is more beautiful still from the dark cloud that has gone over it, *when the sun suddenly lights up all the colours of the forests and shining purple rocks, and it is all reflected in the waters below*.'”

We are not surprised to learn that the mother of this infant phenomenon, who exhibits symptoms so alarmingly like those of adolescence repressed by gin, is herself a phoenix. We are assured again and again, that she had a remarkably original mind, that she was a genius, and "conscious of her originality," and she was fortunate enough to have a lover who was also a genius and a man of "most original mind."

This lover, we read, though "wonderfully similar" to her "in powers and capacity," was "infinitely superior

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

to her in faith and development," and she saw in him the "'Agape,'—so rare to find,—of which she had read and admired the meaning in her Greek Testament; having, *from her great facility in learning languages*, read the Scriptures in their original *tongues*." Of course! Greek and Hebrew are mere play to a heroine; Sanscrit is no more than *a b c* to her; and she can talk with perfect correctness in any language, except English. She is a polking polyglot, a Creuzer in crinoline. Poor men! There are so few of you who know even Hebrew; you think it something to boast of if, like Bolingbroke, you only "understand that sort of learning and what is writ about it"; and you are perhaps adoring women who can think slightly of you in all the Semitic languages successively. But, then, as we are almost invariably told that a heroine has a "beautifully small head," and as her intellect has probably been early invigorated by an attention to costume and deportment, we may conclude that she can pick up the oriental tongues, to say nothing of their dialects, with the same aerial facility that the butterfly sips nectar. Besides, there can be no difficulty in conceiving the depth of the heroine's erudition when that of the authoress is so evident.

In "Laura Gay," another novel of the same school, the heroine seems less at home in Greek and Hebrew, but she makes up for the deficiency by a quite playful familiarity with the Latin classics,—with the "dear old Virgil," "the graceful Horace, the humane Cicero, and the pleasant Livy"; indeed, it is such matter of course with her to quote Latin that she does it at a pic-

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

nic in a very mixed company of ladies and gentlemen, having, we are told, "no conception that the nobler sex were capable of jealousy on this subject. And if, indeed," continues the biographer of Laura Gay, "the wisest and noblest portion of that sex were in the majority, no such sentiment would exist; but while Miss Wyndhams and Mr. Redfords abound, great sacrifices must be made to their existence." Such sacrifices, we presume, as abstaining from Latin quotations, of extremely moderate interest and applicability, which the wise and noble minority of the other sex would be quite as willing to dispense with as the foolish and ignoble majority. It is as little the custom of well-bred men as of well-bred women to quote Latin in mixed parties; they can contain their familiarity with "the humane Cicero" without allowing it to boil over in ordinary conversation, and even references to "the pleasant Livy" are not absolutely irrepressible. But Ciceronian Latin is the mildest form of Miss Gay's conversational powers. Being on the Palatine with a party of sight-seers, she falls into the following vein of well-rounded remark:—

"Truth can only be pure objectively; for even in the creeds where it predominates, being subjective, and parcelled out into portions, each of these necessarily receives a hue of idiosyncrasy, that is, a taint of superstition more or less strong; while in such creeds as the Roman Catholic, ignorance, interest, the basis of ancient idolatries, and the force of authority have gradually accumulated on the pure truth, and transformed it, at last, into a mass of superstitions for the majority of

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

its votaries; and how few are there, alas! whose zeal, courage, and intellectual energy are equal to the analysis of this accumulation, and to the discovery of the pearl of great price which lies hidden beneath this heap of rubbish."

We have often met with women much more novel and profound in their observations than Laura Gay, but rarely with any so inopportunately long-winded. A clerical lord, who is half in love with her, is alarmed by the daring remarks just quoted, and begins to suspect that she is inclined to freethinking. But he is mistaken; when in a moment of sorrow he delicately begs leave to "recall to her memory a *dépôt* of strength and consolation under affliction, which, until we are hard pressed by the trials of life, we are too apt to forget," we learn that she really has "recurrence to that sacred *dépôt*," together with the teapot. There is a certain flavour of orthodoxy mixed with the parade of fortunes and fine carriages in "Laura Gay," but it is an orthodoxy mitigated by study of "the humane Cicero" and by an "intellectual disposition to analyze."

"Compensation" is much more heavily dosed with doctrine; but then it has a treble amount of snobbish worldliness and absurd incident to tickle the palate of pious frivolity. Linda, the heroine, is still more speculative and spiritual than Laura Gay, but she has been "presented," and has more and far grander lovers; very wicked and fascinating women are introduced, — even a French *lionne*; and no expense is spared to get up as exciting a story as you will find in the most immoral novels. In fact, it is a wonderful *pot-pourri* of

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

Almack's, Scotch second-sight, Mr. Rogers's breakfasts, Italian brigands, death-bed conversions, superior authoresses, Italian mistresses, and attempts at poisoning old ladies, the whole served up with a garnish of talk about "faith and development" and "most original minds." Even Miss Susan Barton, the superior authoress, whose pen moves in a "quick, decided manner when she is composing," declines the finest opportunities of marriage; and though old enough to be Linda's mother (since we are told that she refused Linda's father), has her hand sought by a young earl, the heroine's rejected lover. Of course, genius and morality must be backed by eligible offers, or they would seem rather a dull affair; and piety, like other things, in order to be *comme il faut*, must be in "society," and have admittance to the best circles.

"Rank and Beauty" is a more frothy and less religious variety of the mind-and-millinery species. The heroine, we are told, "if she inherited her father's pride of birth and her mother's beauty of person, had in herself a tone of enthusiastic feeling, that, perhaps, belongs to her age even in the lowly born, but which is refined into the high spirit of wild romance only in the far descended, who feel that it is their best inheritance." This enthusiastic young lady, by dint of reading the newspaper to her father, falls in love with the *prime minister*, who, through the medium of leading articles and "the résumé of the debates," shines upon her imagination as a bright particular star, which has no parallax for her, living in the country as simple Miss Wyndham. But she forthwith becomes Baroness Umfraville in her

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

own right, astonishes the world with her beauty and accomplishments when she bursts upon it from her mansion in Spring Gardens, and, as you foresee, will presently come into contact with the unseen *objet aimé*. Perhaps the words "prime minister" suggest to you a wrinkled or obese sexagenarian; but pray dismiss the image. Lord Rupert Conway has been "called, while still almost a youth, to the first situation which a subject can hold in the *universe*," and even leading articles and a résumé of the debates have not conjured up a dream that surpasses the fact.

"The door opened again, and Lord Rupert Conway entered. Evelyn gave one glance. It was enough; she was not disappointed. It seemed as if a picture on which she had long gazed was suddenly instinct with life, and had stepped from its frame before her. His tall figure, the distinguished simplicity of his air — it was a living Vandyke, a cavalier, one of his noble cavalier ancestors, or one to whom her fancy had always likened him, who long of yore had with an Umfraville fought the Paynim far beyond the sea. Was this reality?"

Very little like it, certainly.

By and by it becomes evident that the ministerial heart is touched. Lady Umfraville is on a visit to the Queen at Windsor, and, —

"The last evening of her stay, when they returned from riding, Mr. Wyndham took her and a large party to the top of the keep, to see the view. She was leaning on the battlements, gazing from that 'stately height' at the prospect beneath her, when Lord Rupert was by her side.

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

“‘What an unrivalled view!’ exclaimed she.

“‘Yes, it would have been wrong to go without having been up here. You are pleased with your visit?’

“‘Enchanted! A Queen to live and die under, to live and die for!’

“‘Ha!’ cried he, with sudden emotion and with a *eureka* expression of countenance, as if he had *indeed found a heart in unison with his own.*”

The “*eureka* expression of countenance” you see at once to be prophetic of marriage at the end of the third volume; but before that desirable consummation, there are very complicated misunderstandings, arising chiefly from the vindictive plotting of Sir Luttrell Wycherley, who is a genius, a poet, and in every way a most remarkable character indeed. He is not only a romantic poet, but a hardened rake and a cynical wit; yet his deep passion for Lady Umfraville has so impoverished his epigrammatic talent that he cuts an extremely poor figure in conversation. When she rejects him he rushes into the shrubbery and rolls himself in the dirt; and on recovering devotes himself to the most diabolical and laborious schemes of vengeance, in the course of which he disguises himself as a quack physician and enters into general practice, foreseeing that Evelyn will fall ill, and that he shall be called in to attend her. At last, when all his schemes are frustrated, he takes leave of her in a long letter, written, as you will perceive from the following passage, entirely in the style of an eminent literary man:—

“Oh, lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure, will you ever cast one thought upon the miserable being who addresses

The Priory, Regent's Park

THE LITTLE BOOK OF THE



SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

you? Will you ever, as your gilded galley is floating down the unruffled stream of prosperity, — will you ever, while lulled by the sweetest music, — thine own praises, — hear the far-off sigh from that world to which I am going?"

On the whole, however, frothy as it is, we rather prefer "Rank and Beauty" to the two other novels we have mentioned. The dialogue is more natural and spirited; there is some frank ignorance and no pedantry; and you are allowed to take the heroine's astounding intellect upon trust, without being called on to read her conversational refutations of sceptics and philosophers, or her rhetorical solutions of the mysteries of the universe.

Writers of the mind-and-millinery school are remarkably unanimous in their choice of diction. In their novels there is usually a lady or gentleman who is more or less of a upas tree; the lover has a manly breast; minds are redolent of various things; hearts are hollow; events are utilized; friends are consigned to the tomb; infancy is an engaging period; the sun is a luminary that goes to his western couch, or gathers the rain-drops into his refulgent bosom; life is a melancholy boon; Albion and Scotia are conversational epithets. There is a striking resemblance, too, in the character of their moral comments, such, for instance, as that "it is a fact, no less true than melancholy, that all people, more or less, richer or poorer, are swayed by bad example"; that "books, however trivial, contain some subjects from which useful information may be drawn"; that "vice can too often borrow the language of virtue"; that

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

“merit and nobility of nature must exist, to be accepted, for clamour and pretension cannot impose upon those too well read in human nature to be easily deceived”; and that, “in order to forgive, we must have been injured.” [There is doubtless a class of readers to whom these remarks appear peculiarly pointed and pungent; for we often find them doubly and trebly scored with the pencil, and delicate hands giving in their determined adhesion to these hardy novelties by a distinct *très vrai*, emphasized by many notes of exclamation.] [The colloquial style of these novels is often marked by much ingenious inversion, and a careful avoidance of such cheap phraseology as can be heard every day. Angry young gentlemen exclaim, “’T is ever thus, methinks”; and in the half-hour before dinner a young lady informs her next neighbour that the first day she read Shakespeare she “stole away into the park, and beneath the shadow of the greenwood tree devoured with rapture the inspired page of the great magician.” But the most remarkable efforts of the mind-and-millinery writers lie in their philosophic reflections. The authoress of “Laura Gay,” for example, having married her hero and heroine, improves the event by observing that “if those sceptics, whose eyes have so long gazed on matter that they can no longer see aught else in man, could once enter with heart and soul into such bliss as this, they would come to say that the soul of man and the polypus are not of common origin or of the same texture.” Lady novelists, it appears, can see something else besides matter; they are not limited to phenomena, but can relieve their eyesight by occasional glimpses of the *nou-*

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

menon, and are therefore naturally better able than any one else to confound sceptics, even of that remarkable but to us unknown school which maintains that the soul of man is of the same texture as the polypus.

The most pitiable of all silly novels by lady novelists are what we may call the *oracular* species, — novels intended to expound the writer's religious, philosophical, or moral theories. There seems to be a notion abroad among women, rather akin to the superstition that the speech and actions of idiots are inspired, and that the human being most entirely exhausted of common sense is the fittest vehicle of revelation. To judge from their writings, there are certain ladies who think that an amazing ignorance, both of science and of life, is the best possible qualification for forming an opinion on the knottiest moral and speculative questions. Apparently, their recipe for solving all such difficulties is something like this: Take a woman's head, stuff it with a smattering of philosophy and literature chopped small, and with false notions of society baked hard, let it hang over a desk a few hours every day, and serve up hot in feeble English, when not required. You will rarely meet with a lady novelist of the oracular class who is diffident of her ability to decide on theological questions, who has any suspicion that she is not capable of discriminating with the nicest accuracy between the good and evil in all church parties, who does not see precisely how it is that men have gone wrong hitherto, and pity philosophers in general that they have not had the opportunity of consulting her. Great writers, who have modestly contented themselves with putting their experience into

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

fiction, and have thought it quite a sufficient task to exhibit men and things as they are, she sighs over as deplorably deficient in the application of their powers. "They have solved no great questions"; and she is ready to remedy their omission by setting before you a complete theory of life and manual of divinity, in a love-story, where ladies and gentlemen of good family go through genteel vicissitudes, to the utter confusion of Deists, Puseyites, and ultra-Protestants, and to the perfect establishment of that peculiar view of Christianity which either condenses itself into a sentence of "small caps" or explodes into a cluster of stars on the three hundred and thirtieth page. [It is true, the ladies and gentlemen will probably seem to you remarkably little like any you have had the fortune or misfortune to meet with; for, as a general rule, the ability of a lady novelist to describe actual life and her fellow men is in inverse proportion to her confident eloquence about God and the other world, and the means by which she usually chooses to conduct you to true ideas of the invisible is a totally false picture of the visible.]

As typical a novel of the oracular kind as we can hope to meet with is "The Enigma: a Leaf from the Chronicles of the Wolchorley House." The "enigma" which this novel is to solve is certainly one that demands powers no less gigantic than those of a lady novelist, being neither more nor less than the existence of evil. The problem is stated and the answer dimly foreshadowed on the very first page. The spirited young lady, with raven hair, says, "All life is an inextricable confusion"; and the meek young lady, with auburn

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

hair, looks at the picture of the Madonna which she is copying, and — “*There* seemed the solution of that mighty enigma.” The style of this novel is quite as lofty as its purpose; indeed, some passages on which we have spent much patient study are quite beyond our reach, in spite of the illustrative aid of italics and “small caps,” and we must await further “development” in order to understand them. [Of Ernest, the model young clergyman, who sets every one right on all occasions, we read that “he held not of marriage in the marketable kind, after a social desecration”; that, on one eventful night, “sleep had not visited his divided heart, where tumultuated, in varied type and combination, the aggregate feelings of grief and joy”; and that, “for the *marketable* human article he had no toleration, — be it of what sort or set for what value it might, whether for worship or class, his upright soul abhorred it, whose ultimatum, the self-deceiver, was to him *THE great spiritual lie*, ‘living in a vain show, deceiving and being deceived’; since he did not suppose the phylactery and enlarged border on the garment to be *merely* a social trick.”] (The italics and “small caps” are the author’s, and we hope they assist the reader’s comprehension.) Of Sir Lionel, the model old gentleman, we are told that “the simple ideal of the middle age, apart from its anarchy and decadence, in him most truly seemed to live again, when the ties which knit men together were of heroic cast. The first-born colours of pristine faith and truth engraven on the common soul of man, and blent into the wide arch of brotherhood, where the primeval law of *order* grew and multi-

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

plied, each perfect after his kind, and mutually interdependent."

You see clearly, of course, how colours are first engraven on the soul, and then blent into a wide arch, on which arch of colours — apparently a rainbow — the law of order grew and multiplied, each — apparently the arch and the law — perfect after his kind? If, after this, you can possibly want any further aid towards knowing what Sir Lionel was, we can tell you that in his soul "the scientific combinations of thought could educe no fuller harmonies of the good and the true than lay in the primeval pulses which floated as an atmosphere around it!" and that, when he was sealing a letter, "Lo! the responsive throb in that good man's bosom echoed back in simple truth the honest witness of a heart that condemned him not, as his eye, bedewed with love, rested, too, with something of ancestral pride on the undimmed motto of the family, — 'LOIAUTÉ.'"

[The slightest matters have their vulgarity fumigated out of them by the same elevated style.] Commonplace people would say that a copy of Shakespeare lay on a drawing-room table; but the authoress of "The Enigma," bent on edifying periphrasis, tells you that there lay on the table "that fund of human thought and feeling which teaches the heart through the little name, 'Shakespeare.'" A watchman sees a light burning in an upper window rather longer than usual, and thinks that people are foolish to sit up late when they have an opportunity of going to bed; but, lest this fact should seem too low and common, it is presented to us in the following striking and metaphysical manner:

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

"He marvelled — as a man *will* think for others in a necessarily separate personality, consequently (though disallowing it) in false mental premise, — how differently *he* should act, how gladly *he* should prize the rest so lightly held of within." A footman — an ordinary Jeames, with large calves and aspirated vowels — answers the door-bell, and the opportunity is seized to tell you that he was a "type of the large class of pampered menials who follow the curse of Cain, — 'vagabonds' on the face of the earth, and whose estimate of the human class varies in the graduated scale of money and expenditure. . . . These, and such as these, O England, be the false lights of thy morbid civilization!" We have heard of various "false lights," from Dr. Cumming to Robert Owen, from Dr. Pusey to the Spirit-rappers, but we never before heard of the false light that emanates from plush and powder.

[In the same way very ordinary events of civilized life are exalted into the most awful crises, and ladies in full skirts and *manches à la Chinoise* conduct themselves not unlike the heroines of sanguinary melodramas.] Mrs. Percy, a shallow woman of the world, wishes her son Horace to marry the auburn-haired Grace, she being an heiress; but he, after the manner of sons, falls in love with the raven-haired Kate, the heiress's portionless cousin; and, moreover, Grace herself shows every symptom of perfect indifference to Horace. In such cases, sons are often sulky or fiery, mothers are alternately manœuvring and waspish, and the portionless young lady often lies awake at night and cries a good deal. We are getting used to these things now, just as we are

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

used to eclipses of the moon, which no longer set us howling and beating tin kettles. We never heard of a lady in a fashionable "front" behaving like Mrs. Percy under these circumstances. Happening one day to see Horace talking to Grace at a window, without in the least knowing what they are talking about, or having the least reason to believe that Grace, who is mistress of the house, and a person of dignity, would accept her son if he were to offer himself, she suddenly rushes up to them and clasps them both, saying, "with a flushed countenance and in an excited manner," "This is indeed happiness; for, may I not call you so, Grace? — my Grace, — my Horace's Grace! — my dear children!" Her son tells her she is mistaken, and that he is engaged to Kate, whereupon we have the following scene and tableau: —

"Gathering herself up to an unprecedented height (!), her eyes lightning forth the fire of her anger, —

"'Wretched boy!' she said, hoarsely and scornfully, and clenching her hand, 'take then the doom of your own choice! Bow down your miserable head and let a mother's —'

"'Curse not!' spake a deep, low voice from behind; and Mrs. Percy started, scared, as though she had seen a heavenly visitant appear, to break upon her in the midst of her sin.

"Meantime Horace had fallen on his knees at her feet, and hid his face in his hands.

"Who, then, is she — who! Truly his 'guardian spirit' hath stepped between him and the fearful words, which, however unmerited, must have hung as a pall

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

over his future existence; — a spell which could not be unbound, which could not be unsaid.

“Of an earthly paleness, but calm with the still, iron-bound calmness of death, — the only calm one there, — Katherine stood; and her words smote on the ear in tones whose appallingly slow and separate intonation rung on the heart like the chill, isolated tolling of some fatal knell.

“‘He would have plighted me his faith, but I did not accept it; you cannot, therefore, — you *dare* not curse him. And here,’ she continued, raising her hand to heaven, whither her large dark eyes also rose with a chastened glow, which, for the first time, *suffering* had lighted in those passionate orbs, — ‘here I promise, come weal, come woe, that Horace Wolchorley and I do never interchange vows without his mother’s sanction, without his mother’s blessing!’”

[Here, and throughout the story, we see that confusion of purpose which is so characteristic of silly novels written by women. It is a story of quite modern drawing-room society — a society in which polkas are played and Puseyism discussed; yet we have characters, and incidents, and traits of manner introduced, which are mere shreds from the most heterogeneous romances.] We have a blind Irish harper, “relic of the picturesque bards of yore,” startling us at a Sunday-school festival of tea and cake in an English village; we have a crazy gypsy, in a scarlet cloak, singing snatches of romantic song, and revealing a secret on her death-bed which, with the testimony of a dwarfish miserly merchant, who salutes strangers with a curse and a devilish laugh, goes to prove

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

that Ernest, the model young clergyman, is Kate's brother; and we have an ultra-virtuous Irish Barney discovering that a document is forged, by comparing the date of the paper with the date of the alleged signature, although the same document has passed through a court of law and occasioned a fatal decision. The "Hall" in which Sir Lionel lives is the venerable country-seat of an old family, and this, we suppose, sets the imagination of the authoress flying to donjons and battlements, where "lo! the warder blows his horn"; for, as the inhabitants are in their bedrooms on a night certainly within the recollection of Pleaceman X, and a breeze springs up, which we are at first told was faint, and then that it made the old cedars bow their branches to the greensward, she falls into this mediæval vein of description (the italics are ours):—

"The banner *unfurled it* at the sound, and shook its guardian wing above, while the startled owl *flapped her* in the ivy; the firmament looking down through her 'argus eyes,'—

'Ministers of heaven's mute melodies.'

And lo! two strokes tolled from out the warder tower, and 'Two o'clock' re-echoed its interpreter below."

[Such stories as this of "The Enigma" remind us of the pictures clever children sometimes draw "out of their own head," where you will see a modern villa on the right, two knights in helmets fighting in the foreground, and a tiger grinning in a jungle on the left, the several objects being brought together because the artist thinks each pretty, and perhaps still more because he remembers seeing them in other pictures.]

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

But we like the authoress much better on her mediaeval stilts than on her oracular ones, — when she talks of the *Ich* and of “subjective” and “objective,” and lays down the exact line of Christian verity, between “right-hand excesses and left-hand declensions.” Persons who deviate from this line are introduced with a patronizing air of charity. Of a certain Miss Inshquine she informs us, with all the lucidity of italics and small caps, that “*function, not form, as the inevitable outer expression of the spirit in this tabernacled age, weakly engrossed her.*” And apropos of Miss Mayjar, an evangelical lady who is a little too apt to talk of her visits to sick women and the state of their souls, we are told that the model clergyman is “not one to disallow, through the *super* crust, the undercurrent towards good in the *subject*, or the positive benefits, nevertheless, to the *object.*” We imagine the double-refined accent and protrusion of chin which are feebly represented by the italics in this lady’s sentences! We abstain from quoting any of her oracular doctrinal passages because they refer to matters too serious for our pages just now.

[The epithet “silly” may seem impertinent, applied to a novel which indicates so much reading and intellectual activity as “The Enigma”; but we use this epithet advisedly. If, as the world has long agreed, a very great amount of instruction will not make a wise man, still less will a very mediocre amount of instruction make a wise woman. And the most mischievous form of feminine silliness is the literary form, because it tends to confirm the popular prejudice against the more solid education of women]

When men see girls

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

wasting their time in consultations about bonnets and ball-dresses, and in giggling or sentimental love-confidences, or middle-aged women mismanaging their children, and solacing themselves with acrid gossip, they can hardly help saying, "For Heaven's sake, let girls be better educated; let them have some better objects of thought, some more solid occupations." But after a few hours' conversation with an oracular literary woman, or a few hours' reading of her books, they are likely enough to say, "After all, when a woman gets some knowledge, see what use she makes of it! Her knowledge remains acquisition, instead of passing into culture; instead of being subdued into modesty and simplicity by a larger acquaintance with thought and fact, she has a feverish consciousness of her attainments; she keeps a sort of mental pocket-mirror, and is continually looking in it at her own 'intellectuality'; she spoils the taste of one's muffin by questions of metaphysics; 'puts down' men at a dinner-table with her superior information; and seizes the opportunity of a soirée to catechize us on the vital question of the relation between mind and matter. [And then, look at her writings! She mistakes vagueness for depth, bombast for eloquence, and affectation for originality; she struts on one page, rolls her eyes on another, grimaces in a third, and is hysterical in a fourth. She may have read many writings of great men, and a few writings of great women; but she is as unable to discern the difference between her own style and theirs as a Yorkshireman is to discern the difference between his own English and a Londoner's: rhodomontade is the native accent of her intellect. No

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

— the average nature of woman is too shallow and feeble a soil to bear much tillage ; it is only fit for the very lightest crops.”

It is true that the men who come to such a decision on such very superficial and imperfect observation may not be among the wisest in the world ; but we have not now to contest their opinion — we are only pointing out how it is unconsciously encouraged by many women who have volunteered themselves as representatives of the feminine intellect. We do not believe that a man was ever strengthened in such an opinion by associating with a woman of true culture, whose mind had absorbed her knowledge instead of being absorbed by it. A really cultured woman, like a really cultured man, is all the simpler and the less obtrusive for her knowledge ; it has made her see herself and her opinions in something like just proportions ; she does not make it a pedestal from which she flatters herself that she commands a complete view of men and things, but makes it a point of observation from which to form a right estimate of herself. She neither spouts poetry nor quotes Cicero on slight provocation ; not because she thinks that a sacrifice must be made to the prejudices of men, but because that mode of exhibiting her memory and Latinity does not present itself to her as edifying or graceful. She does not write books to confound philosophers, perhaps because she is able to write books that delight them. In conversation she is the least formidable of women, because she understands you, without wanting to make you aware that you *can't* understand her. She does not give you information, which is the raw material of

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

culture,—she gives you sympathy, which is its subtlest essence.]

[A more numerous class of silly novels than the oracular (which are generally inspired by some form of High Church or transcendental Christianity) is what we may call the *white neckcloth* species, which represent the tone of thought and feeling in the Evangelical party. This species is a kind of genteel tract on a large scale, intended as a sort of medicinal sweetmeat for Low Church young ladies; an Evangelical substitute for the fashionable novel, as the May Meetings are a substitute for the opera. Even Quaker children, one would think, can hardly have been denied the indulgence of a doll; but it must be a doll dressed in a drab gown and a coal-scuttle bonnet,—not a worldly doll, in gauze and span-gles. And there are no young ladies, we imagine,—unless they belong to the Church of the United Brethren, in which people are married without any love-making,—who can dispense with love-stories. Thus, for Evangelical young ladies there are Evangelical love-stories, in which the vicissitudes of the tender passion are sanctified by saving views of Regeneration and the Atonement. [These novels differ from the oracular ones, as a Low Churchwoman often differs from a High Churchwoman: they are a little less supercilious and a great deal more ignorant, a little less correct in their syntax and a great deal more vulgar.]

[The Orlando of Evangelical literature is the young curate, looked at from the point of view of the middle class, where cambric bands are understood to have as thrilling an effect on the hearts of young ladies as

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

epaulettes have in the classes above and below it. In the ordinary type of these novels, the hero is almost sure to be a young curate, frowned upon, perhaps, by worldly mammas, but carrying captive the hearts of their daughters, who can "never forget *that* sermon"; tender glances are seized from the pulpit stairs instead of the opera-box; tête-à-têtes are seasoned with quotations from Scripture, instead of quotations from the poets; and questions as to the state of the heroine's affections are mingled with anxieties as to the state of her soul. The young curate always has a background of well-dressed and wealthy, if not fashionable society; for Evangelical silliness is as snobbish as any other kind of silliness, and the Evangelical lady novelist, while she explains to you the type of the scapegoat on one page, is ambitious on another to represent the manners and conversation of aristocratic people. Her pictures of fashionable society are often curious studies, considered as efforts of the Evangelical imagination; but in one particular the novels of the white neckcloth school are meritoriously realistic, — their favourite hero, the Evangelical young curate, is always rather an insipid personage.]

The most recent novel of this species that we happen to have before us is "The Old Grey Church." It is utterly tame and feeble; there is no one set of objects on which the writer seems to have a stronger grasp than on any other; and we should be entirely at a loss to conjecture among what phases of life her experience has been gained, but for certain vulgarisms of style which sufficiently indicate that she has had the advant-

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

age, though she has been unable to use it, of mingling chiefly with men and women whose manners and characters have not had all their bosses and angles rubbed down by refined conventionalism. It is less excusable in an Evangelical novelist than in any other gratuitously to seek her subjects among titles and carriages. [The real drama of Evangelicalism — and it has abundance of fine drama for any one who has genius enough to discern and reproduce it — lies among the middle and lower classes; and are not Evangelical opinions understood to give an especial interest in the weak things of the earth, rather than in the mighty? Why, then, cannot our Evangelical lady novelists show us the operation of their religious views among people (there really are many such in the world) who keep no carriage, “not so much as a brass-bound gig,” who even manage to eat their dinner without a silver fork, and in whose mouths the authoress’s questionable English would be strictly consistent? Why can we not have pictures of religious life among the industrial classes in England, as interesting as Mrs. Stowe’s pictures of religious life among the negroes?] Instead of this, pious ladies nauseate us with novels which remind us of what we sometimes see in a worldly woman recently “converted”; — she is as fond of a fine dinner-table as before, but she invites clergymen instead of beaux; she thinks as much of her dress as before, but she adopts a more sober choice of colours and patterns; her conversation is as trivial as before, but the triviality is flavoured with gospel instead of gossip. In “The Old Grey Church” we have the same sort of Evangelical travesty of the

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

fashionable novel, and of course the vicious, intriguing baronet is not wanting. [It is worth while to give a sample of the style of conversation attributed to this high-born rake, — a style that, in its profuse italics and palpable innuendoes, is worthy of Miss Squeers.] In an evening visit to the ruins of the Colosseum, Eustace, the young clergyman, has been withdrawing the heroine, Miss Lushington, from the rest of the party, for the sake of a tête-à-tête. The baronet is jealous, and vents his pique in this way: —

“There they are, and Miss Lushington, no doubt, quite safe; for she is under the holy guidance of Pope Eustace the First, who has, of course, been delivering to her an edifying homily on the wickedness of the heathens of yore, who, as tradition tells us, in this very place let loose the wild *beastises* on poor Saint Paul! — Oh, no! by the by, I believe I am wrong, and betraying my want of clergy, and that it was not at all Saint Paul, nor was it here. But no matter, it would equally serve as a text to preach from, and from which to diverge to the degenerate *heathen* Christians of the present day, and all their naughty practices, and so end with an exhortation to ‘come out from among them, and be separate’; — and I am sure, Miss Lushington, you have most scrupulously conformed to that injunction this evening, for we have seen nothing of you since our arrival. But every one seems agreed it has been a *charming party of pleasure*, and I am sure we all feel *much indebted* to Mr. Grey for having *suggested* it; and as he seems so capital a cicerone, I hope he will think of something else equally agreeable to *all*.”

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

[This drivelling kind of dialogue, and equally drivelling narrative, which, like a bad drawing, represents nothing, and barely indicates what is meant to be represented, runs through the book; and we have no doubt is considered by the amiable authoress to constitute an improving novel, which Christian mothers will do well to put into the hands of their daughters.] But everything is relative; we have met with American vegetarians whose normal diet was dry meal, and who, when their appetite wanted stimulating, tickled it with *wet* meal; and so we can imagine that there are Evangelical circles in which "The Old Grey Church" is devoured as a powerful and interesting fiction.

But, perhaps, the least readable of silly women's novels are the *modern-antique* species, which unfold to us the domestic life of Jannes and Jambres, the private love affairs of Sennacherib, or the mental struggles and ultimate conversion of Demetrius the Silversmith. From most silly novels we can at least extract a laugh; but those of the modern-antique school have a ponderous, a leaden kind of fatuity, under which we groan. [What can be more demonstrative of the inability of literary women to measure their own powers, than their frequent assumption of a task which can only be justified by the rarest concurrence of acquirement with genius? The finest effort to reanimate the past is of course only approximative, — is always more or less an infusion of the modern spirit into the ancient form, —]

"Was ihr den Geist der Zeiten heisst,
Das ist im Grund der Herren eigner Geist,
In dem die Zeiten sich bespiegeln."

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

[Admitting that genius which has familiarized itself with all the relics of an ancient period can sometimes, by the force of its sympathetic divination, restore the missing notes in the "music of humanity," and reconstruct the fragments into a whole which will really bring the remote past nearer to us, and interpret it to our duller apprehension, — this form of imaginative power must always be among the very rarest, because it demands as much accurate and minute knowledge as creative vigour.] Yet we find ladies constantly choosing to make their mental mediocrity more conspicuous, by clothing it in a masquerade of ancient names; by putting their feeble sentimentality into the mouths of Roman vestals or Egyptian princesses, and attributing their rhetorical arguments to Jewish high-priests and Greek philosophers. A recent example of this heavy imbecility is, "Adonijah, a Tale of the Jewish Dispersion," which forms part of a series, "uniting," we are told, "taste, humour, and sound principles." "Adonijah," we presume, exemplifies the tale of "sound principles"; the taste and humour are to be found in other members of the series. We are told on the cover that the incidents of this tale are "fraught with unusual interest," and the preface winds up thus: "To those who feel interested in the dispersed of Israel and Judæa, these pages may afford, perhaps, information on an important subject, as well as amusement." Since the "important subject" on which this book is to afford information is not specified, it may possibly lie in some esoteric meaning to which we have no key; but if it has relation to the dispersed of Israel and Judæa at any

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

period of their history, we believe a tolerably well-informed school-girl already knows much more of it than she will find in this "Tale of the Jewish Dispersion." "Adonijah" is simply the feeblest kind of love-story, supposed to be instructive, we presume, because the hero is a Jewish captive, and the heroine a Roman vestal; because they and their friends are converted to Christianity after the shortest and easiest method approved by the "Society for Promoting the Conversion of the Jews" {and because, instead of being written in plain language, it is adorned with that peculiar style of grandiloquence which is held by some lady novelists to give an antique colouring, and which we recognize at once in such phrases as these: "the splendid regnal talents undoubtedly possessed by the Emperor Nero," — "the expiring scion of a lofty stem," — "the virtuous partner of his couch," — "ah, by Vesta!" — and "I tell thee, Roman." Among the quotations which serve at once for instruction and ornament on the cover of this volume, there is one from Miss Sinclair, which informs us that "works of imagination are *avowedly* read by men of science, wisdom, and piety"; from which we suppose the reader is to gather the cheering inference that Dr. Daubeny, Mr. Mill, or Mr. Maurice may openly indulge himself with the perusal of "Adonijah," without being obliged to secrete it among the sofa cushions, or read it by snatches under the dinner-table.

"Be not a baker if your head be made of butter," says a homely proverb, which, being interpreted, may

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

mean, [Let no woman rush into print who is not prepared for the consequences.] We are aware that our remarks are in a very different tone from that of the reviewers who, with perennial recurrence of precisely similar emotions, only paralleled, we imagine, in the experience of monthly nurses, tell one lady novelist after another that they "hail" her productions "with delight." We are aware that the ladies at whom our criticism is pointed are accustomed to be told, in the choicest phraseology of puffery, that their pictures of life are brilliant, their characters well drawn, their style fascinating, and their sentiments lofty. But if they are inclined to resent our plainness of speech, we ask them to reflect for a moment on the chary praise, and often captious blame, which their panegyrists give to writers whose works are on the way to become classics. No sooner does a woman show that she has genius or effective talent, than she receives the tribute of being moderately praised and severely criticized. By a peculiar thermometric adjustment, when a woman's talent is at zero, journalistic approbation is at the boiling-pitch; when she attains mediocrity, it is already at no more than summer heat; and if ever she reaches excellence, critical enthusiasm drops to the freezing-point. Harriet Martineau, Currer Bell, and Mrs. Gaskell have been treated as cavalierly as if they had been men. And every critic who forms a high estimate of the share women may ultimately take in literature will, on principle, abstain from any exceptional indulgence towards the productions of literary women. For it must be plain to every one who looks impartially and extensively into feminine

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

literature, that its greatest deficiencies are due hardly more to the want of intellectual power than to the want of those moral qualities that contribute to literary excellence,—patient diligence, a sense of responsibility involved in publication, and an appreciation of the sacredness of the writer's art. (In the majority of women's books you see that kind of facility which springs from the absence of any high standard; that fertility in imbecile combination or feeble imitation which a little self-criticism would check and reduce to barrenness; just as with a total want of musical ear people will sing out of tune, while a degree more melodic sensibility would suffice to render them silent.) The foolish vanity of wishing to appear in print, instead of being counterbalanced by any consciousness of the intellectual or moral derogation implied in futile authorship, seems to be encouraged by the extremely false impression that to write *at all* is a proof of superiority in a woman. On this ground, we believe that the average intellect of women is unfairly represented by the mass of feminine literature, and that while the few women who write well are very far above the ordinary intellectual level of their sex, the many women who write ill are very far below it. So that, after all, the severer critics are fulfilling a chivalrous duty in depriving the mere fact of feminine authorship of any false prestige which may give it a delusive attraction, and in recommending women of mediocre faculties—as at least a negative service they can render their sex—to abstain from writing.

The standing apology for women who become writers

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

without any special qualification is that society shuts them out from other spheres of occupation. Society is a very culpable entity, and has to answer for the manufacture of many unwholesome commodities, from bad pickles to bad poetry. But society, like "matter," and her Majesty's Government, and other lofty abstractions, has its share of excessive blame as well as excessive praise. Where there is one woman who writes from necessity, we believe there are three women who write from vanity; and, besides, there is something so anti-septic in the mere healthy fact of working for one's bread, that the most trashy and rotten kind of feminine literature is not likely to have been produced under such circumstances. "In all labour there is profit"; but ladies' silly novels, we imagine, are less the result of labour than of busy idleness.

Happily, we are not dependent on argument to prove that Fiction is a department of literature in which women can, after their kind, fully equal men. A cluster of great names, both living and dead, rush to our memories in evidence that women can produce novels not only fine, but among the very finest; — novels, too, that have a precious specialty, lying quite apart from masculine aptitudes and experience. No educational restrictions can shut women out from the materials of fiction, and there is no species of art which is so free from rigid requirements. Like crystalline masses, it may take any form, and yet be beautiful; we have only to pour in the right elements, — genuine observation, humour, and passion. But it is precisely this absence of rigid requirement which constitutes the fatal seduction of novel-

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

writing to incompetent women. [Ladies are not wont to be very grossly deceived as to their power of playing on the piano; here certain positive difficulties of execution have to be conquered, and incompetence inevitably breaks down. Every art which has its absolute technique is, to a certain extent, guarded from the intrusions of mere left-handed imbecility. But in novel-writing there are no barriers for incapacity to stumble against, no external criteria to prevent a writer from mistaking foolish facility for mastery.] And so we have again and again the old story of La Fontaine's ass, who puts his nose to the flute, and, finding that he elicits some sound, exclaims, "Moi, aussi, je joue de la flute"; — a fable which we commend, at parting, to the consideration of any feminine reader who is in danger of adding to the number of "silly novels by lady novelists."

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

WHEN Pope, comparing the enduring honours of a few Greek and Roman writers with the precarious tenure of modern literary fame, predicted that —

“Such as Chaucer is will Dryden be,”

he uttered a prophecy which has been nearly fulfilled. In virtue of his “Alexander’s feast,” his “Character of a Good Parson,” his “Mac-Flecknoe,” a few sketches in his “Absalom and Achitophel,” and a few pregnant couplets which have passed into proverbs, Dryden may be said to have a name to live. But by far the larger portion of his works, both poetical and critical, — writings which at the time and long afterwards were studied equally by scholars and men of the world, and regarded as among the fairest monuments of our literature, — is now forgotten. How many educated men in our day have read the “Hind and the Panther”? What manager of a theatre would be reckless enough to revive “Don Sebastian,” or “All for Love”? Our “Poetical Selections” no longer include the “Annus Mirabilis,” or the “Stanzas to the Lord Protector”; and the critical prefaces of Dryden are as seldom cited as the writings of Alexander Ross. The tide of fashion has nearly ebbed away from the literature of the Restoration. Dryden and Cowley, and Dorset and Buckhurst, are scarcely better known than the “Dionysiaca” of Nonnus, or

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

the "Post-Homerica" of Quintus Calaber. They have paid the penalty of embodying the tastes of a few brief generations, instead of reflecting the permanent forms of beauty and truth, and are obscured by the age which at one time they partially eclipsed. Time has confirmed the titles of our elder quaternion of bards — Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton — to their thrones, and has inscribed younger names in the golden book of our literature. But it has dimmed even the fine gold of Dryden, because of its accompanying alloy, and has expunged from its register many feebler inscriptions, which were at one period believed to be indelibly graven therein.

Yet, whatever may be the inferiority of the literature of the Restoration, as compared with that of the Elizabethan age, it has sterling merits of its own which should rescue it from "mere oblivion." It has at once an historical and a literary value. It represents our forefathers as faithfully as the portraits of Lely and Kneller. It embodies new forms and qualities of our language. It is full of instruction as the costume of the current imagination and philosophy of half a century. It is a link in the continuity of ages necessary to the completeness of the chain which unites Chaucer with Wordsworth and Tennyson. If wanting in the higher qualities of earnest thought and passion, if infinitely less profound in its essence, and infinitely less harmonious in its forms than our elder literature, it is yet pregnant with good sense and keen observation, and clad in an idiomatic purity of diction which we ourselves shall do well to emulate. Compared with its predecessor, indeed, it is a Saint

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Martin's summer. Its brightness is not that of a July noon; its mornings and evenings do not succeed or usher in a warm and starlit twilight. Its foliage is imbrowned by the approach of winter; the fresh and lusty vigour of the spring has passed away.

Yet conceding so much, and admitting also that the present century has widened the domain, and in some degree renewed the summer noon of poetry, — that Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson have explored regions of imagination unknown to Dryden and Pope, — there yet remains for the age which opens with the Restoration the intrinsic and imperishable praise of having clothed masculine good sense in strong, idiomatic, and often harmonious diction. They excelled as much in the rhetoric of verse as their predecessors had excelled in dramatic poetry, or their successors in lyrical and descriptive. Literature, like the history of man, is made up of continuous generations, each possessing, where it is really alive, its separate characteristics, each performing its appointed work. We should reluctantly behold any one of these links dropping from the chain. We would no more forego the literature of Queen Anne's reign than we would have stricken from the register of our kings the comparatively feeble period of the third of our Henries, or the first and second of our Georges. If we can no longer walk in their ways, or sympathize cordially in their feelings, we would at least occasionally revert to them as exponents of a past which had its significance, and bore fruit in its season. We may learn much from the verse of Dryden, and from the prose of Bolingbroke; we may employ their works

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

profitably as an antidote to the exotic vulgarisms that infect our diction, and the sickly sentimentalities which of late years we have been importing from our Continental neighbours. It were a wholesome regimen for more than one popular historian of our time, and for at least a score of our poets and prosemen, to be prescribed a course of study of the English writers who flourished between the Restoration and the accession of George I. Perhaps a Pythagorean silence of seven years might effect a more radical cure: nevertheless, we should gratefully accept the less powerful remedy, and merely insist on a sufficient trial of the prescription.

Deeming that there is so much wholesome stuff in works now almost universally neglected, we hail with sincere pleasure any attempt to bring them again to notice. We await with no common expectation Mr. Croker's long-promised edition of Pope; and we are glad to receive Dryden in a form ¹ which, for its convenience and its moderate price, may put him into the hands of many whom a more complete array of his works would necessarily deter from purchasing them. We incline to think that merely cheap literature has done its worst. The public begins to weary even of classical writers inaccurately printed and ignorantly edited. It has found out that although it is desirable to have Gibbon and Cowper cheap, yet bad texts and worse typography are dear at any price. The Annotated Edition of the British Poets lies under none of

¹ *The Poetical Works of John Dryden*. Edited by Robert Bell. 3 vols. London: J. W. Parker & Son. 1854.

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

these objections. The editor is a well-read scholar, who performs his work conscientiously and with a due sense of its importance. He has bestowed great pains in the revision of the text, and in his critical or historical elucidations; and his biographical prefaces are not mere crude compilations from previously existing sources, but often contain new and original materials, and always afford evidence in themselves that where Mr. R. Bell has employed the labours of his predecessors, he has also winnowed and sifted them diligently. Nor is it an ordinary merit in this series that it is by no means restricted to the best-known and most popular of our elder writers; on the contrary, room has been found for writers like Oldham, who have hitherto occupied a very subordinate place, or been entirely omitted from such collections. The publication, however, of the best works of John Dryden is in itself a sufficient cause for thinking highly both of the editor's good sense and of the proprietors' enterprising spirit. We avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded by this well-executed edition of his best poetical works to cast a brief glance at the literature of which he was, if not exactly the creator, yet certainly the foremost writer, and to attempt, so far as our limits will permit, to gauge and define the qualities of an era of poetry which a few years ago was unduly depreciated by critics generally, and by none more than by those who had gained for themselves a high reputation, as poets or judges of poetry. We are of opinion that they laid their venue wrong; and that when Mr. Wordsworth affirmed that Dryden's descriptions of external nature were merely book

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

descriptions, he mistook altogether the age and the writer.

In reviewing the literary character of an age it is seldom we can meet with a more complete representative of its merits and defects than Dryden was of the literature of the Restoration. He was formed by the times in which he wrote; but formed on so ample a scale that he collected in himself its various attributes, reflected them in their fairest colours and proportions, and, in some measure, also, stood superior to them. It is wrong to regard Dryden as the immediate successor of the great writers who adorned the reigns of Elizabeth and the first two Stuart kings. It would be as correct to say that the Maiden Queen succeeded immediately to the Plantagenets; or that the age of Spenser and Shakespeare directly joined that of Gower and Chaucer. Next to the great age of English poetry, indeed, Dryden appears as the greatest name — but it is *proximus intervallo*. The great age had declined: there was a marked and a long interregnum, and during that intercalary period had grown up much that was vicious in taste, rude in form, and affected in scope and manner. Dryden did not succeed to Jonson, Shirley, and Fletcher, so much as to Donne, Withers, and Cowley. He was not the Augustulus of a decaying empire, so much as the founder of a new dynasty. Compared with the old empire he would rank as a secondary prince: contrasted with the new one he stands a legitimate and powerful monarch.

Dryden, if he is to be estimated fully and fairly, must be considered under the different aspects of a poet,

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

a critic, and a scholar. As a poet, his career may be divided into three epochs: 1. When he was a writer of occasional verses, such as his panegyric upon the Lord Protector, and his "*Annus Mirabilis*." 2. His contributions to the English drama. 3. When he gathered up all his powers, and was at once the most admirable of narrators in verse and the most powerful and pungent of modern satirists. And these phases of his literary career correspond remarkably with the phases of his private life. In the first of them he was striving for subsistence and reputation; he flattered the great, and solicited patrons. In the second, although the struggle for fame and bread in some measure continued, yet the poet was in an altogether firmer and more promising position. He had allied himself with the theatre, which, recovering from the dead palsy of Puritanism, had once more become the most popular and remunerating province of literature. In the third of these epochs he had won for himself the observation of all ranks of society. He was valuable to the court, since his powers of ratiocination in verse enabled him to do it singular service as a pamphleteer; he was caressed by the noble and the wealthy, for his panegyrics were recorded as patents for posterity, and his satire was feared like a brand in the pillory; and he was acknowledged by the whole order of wits — versemen and prosemen — as their Coryphæus, since he was without a rival in all the forms of literature at that time acceptable to the public. Reverence and alarm combined to invest him for many years with all the attributes of a literary despot. Before his lash the booksellers humbled themselves, and

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Grub Street licked the dust; nor was it until glorious John had committed an irreparable mistake in his religion and politics, and identified himself with the falling house of Stuart, that he was fairly deposed, and rendered vulnerable by the shafts of Shadwell, Settle, Milbourne, and Embden; and even then, deprived of his laureate-wreath, unpopular at Court, and obnoxious to the Protestant party, the veteran retained sufficient vigour to rise again a new Antæus from the earth, and to bind around his brows the least perishable leaves of his poetic crown.

The family of the Drydens, so far as it can be traced, came originally from Cumberland, where in the sixteenth century they were in possession of the estate of Staffhill. The orthography of their name varies considerably. Anthony Wood, who was intimate with some members of the family, and Aubrey in his "Lives," both spell it "Dreyden." It was occasionally written "Dreyden," but the usual form was "Driden," until the most illustrious owner of the name set the example of writing it "Dryden." The Dridens of Cumberland disappear in the first half of the sixteenth century. Thenceforward the principal branch of the family established itself at Canons-Ashby, in Northamptonshire, where Sir Erasmus Driden filled the office of high sheriff of the county under Queen Elizabeth, and was created a baronet by her successor in 1619. The third son of Sir Erasmus was the poet's father, Erasmus Driden, Esq., the owner of a small estate in the village of Blakesley, about three miles from the paternal seat at Canons-Ashby. This gentleman married Mary, the daughter of the Rev.

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Henry Pickering, a Puritan minister and youngest son of Sir Gilbert Pickering. This was the second intermarriage between these families, and their connection appeared at an early period of the poet's career to afford him the best chance of attaining a good social position. For Sir Gilbert Pickering enjoyed the favour of Cromwell, was a member of the Protector's House of Lords, and, independently of his private income, held several lucrative employments. But the fortunes of Sir Gilbert's grandson were otherwise ordained.

John Dryden was the eldest of fourteen children — an amount of population which must have been a serious encumbrance upon the *paterna rura* at Blakesley. That they proved so appears from the fact that, although the Drydens *a parte ante* were landed proprietors on a greater or smaller scale, the Drydens *a parte post*, that is, the fruits of the marriage of Erasmus and Mary, were some of them either grocers or tobacconists, or espoused respectable dealers in refined sugar and choice havannas. That they entered into business was greatly to their credit, more especially as there is reason to think that they followed it with diligence. But assuredly in those days when coats of arms were assigned to gentlemen alone, it was a descent in the social scale to offer their wares under the signs of the Coffee Shrub and the Wild Indian.

Dryden was born on the ninth of August, 1631, in the parsonage-house of Oldwincle All-Saints, in the county of Northampton. The house is still standing, and contains a small room still traditionally known as Dryden's room. As Henry Pickering became in due time rector

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

of Oldwincle, he may possibly have been its curate at the time of his daughter's accouchement; but we are not told whether it was chance or purpose which transferred from Blakesley Hall to Oldwincle Rectory the honour of hearing the poet's first cry. He received the rudiments of his education either at Tichmarsh, where an inscription in the schoolhouse claims him for its "alumnus," or at the neighbouring school of Oundle. With both places, and with his Northamptonshire kindred generally, — in spite of some "flyting anent Whig and Tory," as Lady Margaret Bellenden phrases it, — Dryden kept up relations through life. From one of his letters, indeed, we learn that he booked his place in the Oundle coach a week in advance; that it took two days to travel from London thither; and that his friends Southerne and Congreve were to meet him on the road. This journey was in 1695, and consequently Dryden was in the habit of visiting his Northamptonshire kindred almost to the time of his decease.

But neither Tichmarsh nor Oundle afforded instruction enough for a lad of promising abilities; and that Dryden must have early acquired a respectable acquaintance with both Greek and Latin is implied in the circumstance that he translated much and well from them, and that his mature years were too much occupied to allow him leisure for consulting Lilly's Grammar or Scapula's Lexicon. He was admitted a king's scholar at Westminster School under Dr. Busby, whose rigorous discipline made either scholars or blockheads. Busby did not make Dryden a blockhead, but, though he doubtless scourged him soundly, — for he was an

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

impartial flagellant, — inspired his pupil with a warm and lasting regard.

Busby either elicited or discovered the poetic vein of his pupil. One of his exercises at Westminster — a translation of the third Satire of Persius — was meritorious enough to put on record: and at this school he composed his “Elegy on the Death of Lord Hastings,” and some commendatory verses on the Divine Epigrams of his friend John Hoddesdon, both of which are included in his works. Their quaint and affected manner shows that the Westminster scholar had taken Donne and Cowley for his models of English verse.

Of Dryden’s college career nothing is known beyond what may be learned from the University register. He went up as a Westminster scholar to Trinity College, Cambridge, in May, 1650; took the degree of B.A. in January, 1653–4; and was created M.A. in 1657. Shadwell accuses Dryden of indulging “a scurrilous vein,” and of having been obliged to fly from college for “traducing a nobleman”; but as Dryden remained three years in Cambridge after taking his bachelor’s degree, this story must be regarded as a proof of Shadwell’s rather than of Dryden’s scurrility. That the latter was not indeed always observant of college rules appears from his being put out of commons for a fortnight, “for disobedience to the vice-master, and for contumacy in taking his punishment.” But as the saints in 1652 inherited the earth, or at least predominated in the universities, we need not impute to the poet any very extraordinary backsliding. The Puritan fare

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

can hardly have been very palatable to a high-spirited undergraduate. Whether for this cause, or for any subsequent distaste, Cambridge and Dryden seem to have fulfilled towards each other Dogberry's wish, that a merry meeting might be prohibited. He did not become a fellow of his college, and he avowed many years afterwards his preference for the rival "alma-mater" —

"Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
Than his own mother University.
Thebes did his green unknowing youth engage,
He chooses Athens in his riper age."

In 1654 Dryden, on the decease of his father, came into possession of his share of the Blakesley estate. Its whole annual value was sixty pounds; and by his right of primogeniture two thirds of this narrow rental devolved upon him immediately, with the remainder in reversion at his mother's death. "How much money have you, Master Mathew? Marry, some forty pounds a year for all charges, and the usual drawbacks on landed property to meet meanwhile." Forty pounds, though nearly equivalent to thrice the sum in our days, was but a poor pittance for a gentleman born; and Dryden seems to have discerned that his head must help his body and its members, and that learning was an excellent thing when house and land were so unproductive. Accordingly he returned to Cambridge for three years, and apparently hived wisdom with each of them. He who had "read Polybius in English for pleasure" as a boy was likely to cultivate diligently both Greek and Roman Lore *inter academi silvas*. And perhaps Dryden had fewer disturbing causes than most men in pro-

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

secuting his studies. He was neither very social in his tastes nor fluent in conversation. The grave society of the Cambridge Puritans, who looked upon the *literæ humaniores* as so much carnal knowledge, must have been distasteful to him: and as he neither then nor afterwards was addicted to bowls or cards or the bottle, it seems reasonable to conclude that his time, like that of his illustrious contemporary Milton, was spent more with the dead than the living.

In 1657, the year in which Dryden quitted Cambridge, he completed his twenty-sixth birthday; and as he had shown himself not averse from marriage, he perhaps began to think it high time to improve his income. His prospects of advancement were fair, but, as it proved, delusive. His cousin, Sir Gilbert Pickering, stood high in Cromwell's favour. He had sat on the judgement-seat with Bradshaw when a king was in the dock; he had been one of the Parliamentary councillors of state, a member of Cromwell's house of peers, a member also of his privy council. He was now lord chamberlain at the Protector's court. In Sir John Dryden, again, elder brother of the poet's father, a second patron was probably ready to take him by the hand. Both Pickering and Sir John were indeed noted as Pharisees of the Pharisees, yet neither of them was perhaps indisposed to promote the interests of his youthful relative. Dryden indeed seems to have acted as private secretary to Pickering, and thus barbed one of Shadwell's arrows with the taunt, —

"The next step of advancement you began
Was being clerk to Noll's Lord Chamberlain."

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

But Dryden was destined to be the architect of his own fortunes. The great Protector died; Richard Cromwell was a broken reed; the Pickering interest was at ebb-tide; and in 1660 Charles II was restored to the throne of his ancestors.

The first memorable verses composed by Dryden were his "Panegyric on the late Lord Protector." He was nearly thirty years of age when he published them, and although not exempt from conceits, they exhibit a diminished admiration for Cowley, and a decided improvement in the art of versification. Davenant had now become his model, and although Davenant's "Gondibert" "in heroic stanzas" has long since ceased to be read, it was a pattern not merely better suited to Dryden's genius, but also much more consonant with good sense and good versification than Cowley's Pindarics, or Donne's incorrigible Elegies. The stanzas to Cromwell's memory were published at a most unfortunate period. Their grave and sincere tone would doubtless be acceptable to the Independent party. But there was little leisure to read or mark them. The major-generals were at variance with each other; the civilians were weary of a military government; the Royalists were plotting as busily as ever; the head of the State was weak; the heart of the nation was faint; the intentions of Monk and his soldiers were dubious; the people were weary of change; and Charles was within a few hours' sail from Dover. The revolution had ebbed away, and royalty came back on a spring-tide of zeal and enthusiasm. Dryden had made a bad beginning for one who desired his verses to be made bread for himself;

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

but although his compliments to the dead were ungracious to the living, it is greatly to his honour that he never recanted his eulogy of Cromwell, even when his enemies threw it in the teeth of the author of "Absalom and Achitophel."

Dryden's change of opinion, or at least of its vehicle, language, was probably unattended with much regret or self-sacrifice. He was connected with the Puritans more by natural ties and early associations than by any deep feeling or deliberate convictions of his own. He had been born too late to remember vividly the abuses of the first Charles's reign; but he was old enough to remember the iron restraints and the ceremonial prudery of the Puritan regimen. He had witnessed Cromwell's abortive efforts to restore England to any secure or stable form of government; and when the mighty master's hands had dropped the reins, he had beheld disorder and discord yoked to the state chariot. Even the Puritan party desired the king's return. He was at least one man in place of five or six military despots, and, having so long eaten the bitter bread of banishment, he might be presumed to have profited by the discipline of adversity. The hopes entertained were not unreasonable. Apart, indeed, in his cottage at Chalfont, sat one man who discerned the inherent taint of the Stuart blood and despaired of its being healed by any waters; but the wisdom of Milton was shared by few, and the desire of the nation was toward their king. It is no disgrace to Dryden that he participated in feelings all but universal, and little discredit to him that he, a needy man, hastened to obliterate the memory of his heroic stanzas by

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

the production of his "*Astræa Redux*." The publication of this "copy of verses," however, cost him for ever the support of the Pickerings. It had never been worth much to him, for he was now thirty years of age, unplaced and unsalaried. And now began what proved to be the proper business of his life. He sought a patron in a publisher, and began to coin his brain for ducats. He removed from the Lord Chamberlain's rooms of state to an obscure lodging in the house of Herringman, a bookseller in the New Exchange, and commenced author by profession, although he seems never to have stood on the lowest step of the ladder, or, as his enemies so often reproached him, to have become a mere book-seller's hack. On the contrary, even while under Herringman's roof, we have intimations of his forming and retaining more than one titled acquaintance, as well as of his intimacy with Sir Robert Howard, son of the first Earl of Berkshire, a gentleman who dallied with the Muses, and was just then bringing out a collection of poems. Dryden prefixed some complimentary lines to the volume. He had probably rendered Sir Robert similar service to that which Pope afforded to Wycherley — he mended and clear-starched Sir Robert's lines.

Dryden's intimacy with Sir Robert began with literary copartnership, and was cemented, although not without some intervening coolness, by marriage with his sister, the Lady Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. The lampooners of the age allege that this lady's character was not immaculate. But for these charges there is no evidence. An alliance with a man who depended upon his writings for his bread, who had

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

not yet particularly distinguished himself, who had "Bitter Puritans" for his kinsfolk, and, what was perhaps worse in the eyes of his wife's family, relations in trade, may not have been very acceptable to the Earl of Berkshire. But if the pedigree of the Howards sustained some blemish by it, Dryden was the greatest sufferer in the end by the match. The intellect of Lady Elizabeth was weak, her temper was violent, and she appears neither to have been proud of her husband's literary distinctions, nor, although nearly portionless herself, to have submitted with a good grace to the privations of a narrow and precarious income. As Dante complained of his "*fiera moglia*," so Dryden rarely misses an opportunity for a sarcasm against matrimony. Mr. Bell's researches have solved the question which eluded the industry of Malone. From the evidence of the register, it appears that Dryden was married on the first of December, 1663, at the parish church of Saint Swithin's, in London.

With his connection with Sir Robert Howard began Dryden's career as a dramatic poet. But as we have distinguished this as the second phase of his literary life, we shall, before entering upon it, sum up what he wrote and published while he still may be considered as the connecting link between the writers who preceded and the writers who followed the Restoration. The poems of this first period were all occasional, — prompted by the events of the day, — and were either elegies or panegyrics. Once indeed he opened his natural vein of satire at the expense of the Dutch, but with far inferior effect to Marvell, or even to some who were both Mar-

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

vell's inferiors and his own. Dryden began to write late, and was long in discovering the natural bent and limit of his powers. Of his verses, whether in the ten-syllable heroic measure, or in the quatrain stanza, few are remembered now, and few indeed deserve to be memorable. To modern ears his panegyric seems servile, his elegy too quaint and curious for truth. Yet it would be unfair to try Dryden or his contemporaries by our own measures of fitness or standard of opinion. We have ceased to flatter kings; we no longer mourn in verse for the decease of lords or ladies; we grant no privileges of apotheosis; we do not discern in the misfortunes or the felicity of the great either a malign or a favourable aspect of the stars. Our homage has been turned to the people, and in some measure to ourselves. We glory in the nineteenth century, and we glorify ourselves for being born in it. But when Dryden wrote, divinity was still conceived to hedge a king; and the conception was strengthened in the minds of all, except a few surly Independents, by the horror awakened by the king's execution, by the special pleading of the pulpit and Eikôn Basilike, by the restoration of peace at home, by weariness of the Puritanic yoke, and by the almost unanimous voice of the press and the theatre. Marvell and Milton stood alone. But the herd of court poets and court preachers had other objects in view than poverty and freedom; and if Dryden took his station among the adulators of power he was at least not singular in his choice, and extravagant as his eulogies appear to us they were much less fulsome than those of his literary contemporaries in general. We may turn with aversion

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

from his praises of the "best of kings" and Lady Castlemaine; but we should not forget that he had discerned and celebrated the royal nature of Cromwell in verses which posterity will never wholly let die. It is curious to remark the close resemblance between Cowley's and Dryden's characters of the Great Protector; for though Cowley purposed to defame, he was enforced to extol, and though he puts his praise in the Devil's mouth, yet his rejoinder is no answer to the discerning fiend. The panegyric of the "*Astræa Redux*," though written after Dryden had strengthened his "prentice hand," is as inferior to the lines "on the Death of the Protector" as Charles himself was inferior to Cromwell.

We shall not expend many words upon Dryden's plays. A few of them attained an immediate popularity, a few were coldly approved, and others promptly condemned. Posterity, however, has included them all under one verdict, and they are never represented and seldom read. A few passages of vigorous versification are indeed retained in specimens of the English poets; but these owe their preservation less to their dramatic merits than to the power of reasoning in verse in which lay Dryden's strength. "*Hic currus et arma*" — his talents were those of the pleader and the satirist; he sketched characters in verse as faithfully and vividly as Clarendon drew them in prose; he argued in poetry as closely and effectively as Serjeant Maynard argued in the Court of Common Pleas. But he had not the gift either of constructing a dramatic plot or of bringing his characters into relations with one another, or of diversifying

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

the dialogue, or of moving to mirth or tears. His poverty of dramatic invention indeed was not inaptly pointed out by Matthew Clifford: "I am strangely mistaken," he writes in his "Notes on the Hind and Panther," "if I have not seen this very Almanzor of yours in some disguise about this town, and passing under another name. Prithee tell me true, was not this huff-cap once the Indian Emperor? and, at another time, did he not call himself Maximine? Was not Lyndaraxa once called Almeria — I mean under Montezuma the Indian Emperor? I protest and vow they are either the same, or so alike that I can't for my heart distinguish one from the other. You are, therefore, a strange unconscionable thief, that art not content to steal from others, but dost rob thy poor wretched self too." Dryden, it should be added, was conscious of his own dramatic deficiencies, and after the failure of his comedy of the "Assignation" candidly admits them. "I desire," he says, "to be no longer the Sisyphus of the stage; to roll up a stone with endless labour, which, to follow the proverb, *gathers no moss*, and which is perpetually falling down again. I never thought myself very fit for an employment where many of my predecessors have excelled me in all kinds; and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgement, have outdone me in comedy." He probably alludes to Etherege and Shadwell, who, inferior to Dryden in every other respect, possessed the faculty denied to him of drawing from the life, and reproducing on the stage the vices and follies which they saw and practised in society.

When Dryden began to write for the stage, dramatic

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

literature was afflicted by two opposite maladies. Its healthy circulation had been suddenly arrested by Puritanism, and when the ban imposed by the saints was at length removed, the national taste was as suddenly corrupted. The corruption arose partly from an incapacity for relishing the great dramas which had entertained the Maiden Queen and her court, and partly from a capacity for enjoying the bombast and licence of the French theatre, as it flourished under the patronage of Louis XIV. Overstrained pretensions to sanctity had struck a deathblow upon all genuine heroic sentiment in the nation. The elect had so often shown themselves false, ambitious, and self-seeking that men had begun to distrust even the semblance of truth, public spirit, and self-sacrifice, and rejoiced in reducing to a common level the nobler passions which elevate at once both real and scenic life. When Sydney, and Essex, and Raleigh surrounded the throne of the sovereign, Spenser's visions of beauty and Shakespeare's women were intelligible creations; but at a court where Castlemaine presided, Ophelia, Desdemona, and Juliet were little more than feeble and ineffectual abstractions. England had lost in the Civil Wars "its elder breed of noble blood." The Roundhead had withdrawn sullenly from the contest, and either sought a new home on alien shores, or retired far from the hum of cities to his plough or his loom; the old Cavalier also was now seldom found in the purlieus of the court. He had greeted the Restoration as the fulfilment of his joys and the answer to his prayers; but to him it had brought only disappointment and dismay. The king had indeed returned, but there came not back

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

with him the ancient chivalry of the land—the Falklands, the Nevilles, the Herberts, and the Veres, the men whom Van Dyck painted, the men whom Clarendon has described in colours scarcely less vivid. In their room had returned a band of dissolute exiles, at once rapacious and profuse, whom adversity had neither disciplined nor purified, and whom prosperity and power rendered more reckless and corrupt. They had, many of them, passed the term of their banishment at Paris and Madrid, and there beheld the attractive spectacle of absolute monarchy pampered by the arts and especially adulated by the drama. The stately ceremonial of the Spanish court, no less than the elaborate decorum of the court of France, hardly concealed the moral laxity which prevailed at both. Each was the home of licentious intrigues; the monarchs lived in ostentatious adultery, and the courtier who had not at least one avowed mistress was regarded either as a block or a churl. The Spanish and French play-writers had long ceased to draw their characters from nature. The intrigues of comedy were those of the court, and tragedy borrowed its fable and its heroes from Seneca and Euripides, from the declining eras of the Roman and Attic drama. From these debased or pseudo-classic types the theatre of the Restoration took its models. In tragedy, passion was superseded by rhetoric; in comedy, the follies of the day were represented by the vices of the day. With the Restoration, indeed, love disappears and sensuousness takes its place. Nor was vice casually or capriciously employed as a means of public attraction. It was not so much the condiment

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

which flavoured the meat as the meat itself. In the drama of the age of Elizabeth and the first two Stuarts, there is undoubtedly much indelicate writing. Ford meddled with interdicted and repulsive subjects; Fletcher and Massinger are frequently coarse; and there are phrases and allusions in Jonson and Shakespeare which we may desire that they had "discreetly blotted" out. But in none of the writers anterior to the Restoration do we find any systematic attempt to represent vice as laudable, and virtue as ridiculous. We do not find even in Shirley the breach of the marriage vow held up as the whole duty of man and woman also; and Shirley's plays approach much nearer to those of Afra Behn, Etherege, and Shadwell in their coarse profligacy than those of either Fletcher or Ford in their worst extravagances. The masculine coarseness of the earlier period is indeed like a blemish on a fair face — a blot on the 'scutcheon — a flaw in crystal — the foot of clay to the golden image; but the flaw, the blot, the blemish, and the clay are separable from their purer and richer accompaniments; whereas the systematic profligacy of the dramatic literature which followed the return of Charles II percolates the entire system, and clings to its members as the leprosy of the East to the luckless outcasts from the dwellings of men.

We acquit Dryden of acting upon any formal scheme for demoralizing his age: he merely followed a corrupt fashion, and owed his popularity, as a writer for the stage, to his subserviency. He would probably have alleged in his defence — and he might fairly do so — the old excuse of Ovid: —

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

*"Crede mihi, mores distant a carmine nostri;
Vita verecunda est, musa jocosa, mihi."*

And it must be admitted also that his worst plays are much less offensive than many which, at the moment of their production, were preferred to his. Moreover, we must do him the justice to add that he kissed the rod with becoming meekness, when, in 1698, Jeremy Collier published his "Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage." On no one's shoulders did the flail of the merciless Non-Juror descend with more weight than upon Dryden's. From no one — for he had approved himself cunning in controversial fence — was a prompter or more acrimonious reply looked for by the world. It was expected, and doubtless much desired that Dares should beat Entellus black and blue. But the world was disappointed. Dryden, who on much smaller provocations had exhibited violent resentment, who both in prose and verse wielded a weapon of the keenest edge, on this occasion stood silent and abashed. Indeed, as we have seen, he did not estimate highly his dramatic productions: he was perhaps content with the fame and money which they brought him, and did not care to ruffle himself in the defence of what he lightly valued. But it is more charitable to him, and indeed more consistent with all we know of his sober and laborious life, to infer that he felt Collier to be in the right, and that although he himself had contributed to the vices of the age, he held it "stuff of the conscience" not to interpose between them and their castigation. At a later period he mentioned the "Short View," in the preface to his "Fables." He complained of the asper-

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

ity with which he had been treated. He alleged certain pleas in exculpation of his errors, but, in the main, he acknowledges the justice of the reproof. "If Mr. Collier," he said, "be my enemy, let him triumph. If he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance."

Dryden's career as a writer for the stage may be divided into four periods: (1) From its commencement with the comedy of the "Wild Gallant," in February, 1662-3, to the suspension of dramatic entertainments in 1666, the year in which Old London City was laid in ashes; (2) from the re-opening of the playhouses to the time when the King's Theatre was burnt down, in 1671-2; (3) during the next ten years Dryden, who had become an active pamphleteer in verse, and a critic almost without appeal in prose, discontinued writing for the stage; but (4) when the Revolution deprived him of court favour, and of his offices of laureate and historiographer royal, and he was again almost as needy as when he lived under the roof of Herringman, he once more resorted to the drama for a livelihood, and, though declining in years and in health, produced five plays, and among them one of the most genial and vigorous of his productions, "Don Sebastian."

That Dryden looked to his dramatic compositions as a sure and prompt source of income appears from the compact into which he entered, after the success of his earlier plays, with the managers of the King's Theatre. He agreed to furnish the patentee, Killigrew, with three dramas annually, in consideration of a share and quarter in the theatre. Had he kept to his obligation this

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

arrangement would have produced him yearly between three and four hundred pounds. But he overrated his powers, and, although he wrote rapidly, he was unable to fulfil his contract to the letter. His industry, however, was great. In 1667 he published his "*Annus Mirabilis*," and during the next two or three years he produced no less than six plays; and if other dramatic writers have exceeded him in fertility of invention and rapidity of execution, yet it should be remembered that Dryden, in thus purveying for the stage, was rather forcing than complying with his natural bent.

He began as a pupil of Corneille and the rhymed drama of the French school. He did not indeed introduce this fashion, which Hayley absurdly revived in the last century, but he defended it, in his "*Essay on Dramatic Poetry*," with a vigour and felicity of style as remarkable at least as his theory was erroneous. Sir Robert as a dramatic poet was inferior to Dryden, but as a critic his views were on this point more correct, and although Dryden had the public on his side, both the public and himself were in the wrong. Sir Robert had at first modestly combated his brother-in-law's dogmas, but replied to his "*Essay*" with more pith and point. In his defence of the "*Essay*," Dryden handled Sir Robert somewhat roughly, and the brothers-in-law were for a time estranged from each other.

Dryden, indeed, was at this period of his literary career like a man feeling about in the dark, and trying to discover, amid a variety of roads, the one which alone leads to his home. He was master of the art of reasoning in verse, and his instincts told him that here lay his

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

proper strength. He was also no mean proficient in *carte and tierce* dialogue, and, like Euripides, introduced on the stage a mode of conversation that would have suited a tart debate in the forum or the schools, but which was as ill adapted to the theatre as Sir Roger L'Estrange's style would have been to the pulpit. That our readers may not accuse us of underrating Dryden's dramatic style in his first manner, we cite the following scene from the "Conquest of Granada." The solicitations of the lover and the denials of the Queen are expressed as antithetically as in the very worst scene of the very worst extant Greek tragedy — the "Electra" of Euripides: —

Almahide. My light will sure discover those who talk. —
Who dares to interrupt my private walk?

Almanzor. He who dares love, and for that love must die,
And knowing this, dares yet love on, am I.

Almahide. That love which you can hope, and I can pay,
May be received and given in open day:

My praise and my esteem you had before:
And you have bound yourself to ask no more.

Almanzor. Yes, I have bound myself: but will you take
The forfeit of that bond, which force did make?

Almahide. You know you are from recompence debarred:
But purest love can live without reward.

Almanzor. Pure love had need to be itself a feast:
For, like pure elements, 't will nourish least.

Almahide. It therefore yields the only pure content:
For it, like angels, needs no nourishment."

And in this fashion — "the right fencing grace: tap for tap, and so part fair" — this skilful pair of Moorish lovers argue their case through some score of similar rejoinders.

Dryden would not yield to the arguments of Sir Robert

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Howard in behalf of good sense and dramatic consistency : but he was convinced by his own maturer judgement and by the study of Shakespeare, and abandoned his error as cordially as he once maintained it. In the prologue to the tragedy of "Aurungzebe," produced in 1675, he announced his abandonment of the old form, and he followed up his recantation practically in 1678, by the play of "All for Love," expressly modelled on the example of Shakespeare. This, as he tells us, was the only play he ever wrote for himself; "the rest were given to the people." In the ensuing year he altered "Troilus and Cressida," and wrote, jointly with Lee, the tragedy of "Ædipus." To his version of "Troilus and Cressida," he prefixed an "Essay on the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy," in which he modified or abjured many of his earlier opinions upon dramatic composition. It was a singular trait in his character that he made the public his confessor. Whatever subject he chose, in whatever manner he treated it, he laboured to persuade his readers that the subject was the most eligible and his treatment of it the most judicious possible. The very confidence with which he asserts his merits is perhaps an indirect proof that he mistrusted himself, and sought to confirm by the suffrages of his readers the opinions which secretly he doubted. But whatever were his motives for them, the public were gainers by his confessions. Periodical criticism was as yet uninvented. A few works, indeed, upon the laws of writing had been published subsequently to the crude discourses of Puttenham and Webbe. But although Sir Philip Sydney's "Defence of Poesy" will always be

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

read with pleasure, and Campion and Sir John Harrington may still be consulted with profit, Dryden must be allowed the praise of being the first English critic who applied general laws to particular cases in literature, and who initiated the public in the art of discriminating in matters of taste. His own prose style has always been accounted a model by the best judges. Charles Fox, in the composition of his history, regarded Dryden as an authority for the use of words from which there was no appeal. He has greater facility than Cowley; more masculine vigour than Addison: and he combines with singular facility the twin elements of our language — its Roman amplitude with its Saxon raciness. If his critical works contain many assertions from which we are compelled to dissent, if they enunciate no new principles, or sometimes seem to abound with commonplace remarks, we must remember that at the time they were written his canons of taste were novel, his mistakes were inseparable from a first inquiry, and his commonplaces discoveries to those who read them originally. Had Dryden lived in the present century, he would probably have rivalled Southey or Mr. Macaulay in the number and excellence of his periodical essays. He would have produced few plays, if he had been able to employ his various knowledge and his masculine diction in the composition of “articles,” and instead of a contract with the King’s or Duke’s Theatre, he would probably once a quarter have received a cheque from Messrs. Longmans or Murray. Instead of Edinburgh or Quarterly reviews, he wrote essays and prefaces: and to these we can still recur with pleasure, or at least with interest.

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Dryden, however, was to learn from rougher critics than Howard, and by a less pleasant discipline than enlarged study and reflection, the faults of his theory respecting the employment of rhyme in dramatic compositions. His popularity as an author bred envy in many quarters: his plainness of speech did not mitigate it. Although not unacceptable to the leaders of politics and literature, he seems never to have secured for himself any very powerful patron. He was no suitor for favours: he did not, until a comparatively late period of his career, identify himself with any of the parties of the time. He had indeed complimented Charles and Lady Castlemaine and Chancellor Hyde, but he did not besiege their doors; and neither his pursuits nor his tastes permitted him to become the boon companion of the Sedleys, Buckinghams, and Rochesters. But although he was no partisan, it was remembered that he had once been a Puritan, and although he kept clear of popular controversies in general, he had shown quite satirical power enough to create enemies. As yet was undiscovered the art of rendering an adversary ridiculous, whether by "showing him up" in a review, or by caricaturing his form or features in a weekly newspaper. *H. B.* and "Punch" as yet slept among the possibilities of the future. Their mirthful and salutary influence was ill supplied by the coarse banter of the theatre: and to the theatre was allotted the task of making Dryden and heroic plays at once the butt of satire. In the winter of 1671 the Duke of Buckingham produced his famous "Rehearsal," a burlesque which had wit enough in it to survive its original object, since

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Cibber turned it against Pope, and Garrick continued to perform its principal character long after both Dryden and his successor in satire were beyond reach of its shafts. Buckingham is said to have been assisted by Butler, Spratt, Clifford, and others in feathering and pointing his quiver of arrows: indeed, it bears traces of having been the work of an academy of wits. Davenant, who has the credit of introducing heroic plays, was originally meant for the hero, but death delivered from this further trial one who had long been an abundant cause of wit in others. Dryden in 1670 had succeeded to Davenant's vacant laureateship, and was in many respects better suited for this kind of satire than his predecessor. His person was inclined to corpulence, whence he had acquired the nickname of *Squab*. His costume was singular: he wore, at least in his earlier days, "a suit of Norwich drugget"; and that at a time when courtiers and poets carried an estate on their heads and backs in the form of feathers, velvet, Mechlin lace, and Steinkirk wigs. He was notoriously a bad reader, and recited his sounding couplets with a tedious and hesitating delivery that frequently raised inextinguishable laughter in the frequenters of the Green Room. Buckingham, a first-rate mimic himself, sedulously trained the actor who performed *Bayes* in all the peculiarities of Dryden. The town was highly amused, but its taste was not corrected by the wit of "The Rehearsal." So long as Dryden continued to write them, heroic plays continued to be popular. He had now become the most conspicuous critic of his time. His canons of criticism gave the laws to coffee-houses and clubs: his

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

plays attracted crowds to the theatres. And yet, high as he now stood in contemporary reputation, he would probably have left a name less enduring than that of Otway, and been confounded with the common herd of Crownes and Settles, had he not broken fresh ground in a different department of literature.

In the year 1681 appeared his great poem of "Absalom and Achitophel." Of his powers as a satirist, at least as a reasoner in verse, he had already given many proofs in his dramatic compositions. A large proportion of the most nervous and emphatic lines in his plays belongs to the class of gnomic verses, — ethical, social, or sarcastic maxims, such as belong equally to satire and the stage. But these were scattered over the wide surface of twenty-one dramas, and were too often buried beneath rant, buffoonery, and indecency. At length, in political satire a proper frame and canvas were provided for his talents; and — *verus incessu patuit deus* — Dryden, after doing task-work for the theatre, and racking his invention for compliments to the unworthy, stood confessed the poetic chief of the Restoration era.

We are not informed whether reflection, advice, or accident guided Dryden into the right path at last. He had now arrived at the ripe age of fifty years, and was "long in debating upon and long in choosing" his proper vocation. He who on so many points of comparative insignificance took the public for his confessor has unluckily been silent upon the motives which led him to quit the drama for controversial, satirical, and didactic verses. A clue to his change and better choice may perhaps be discovered in the circumstances of the times.

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

In the first place, he had himself suffered much from the envy, insolence, and even violence of his contemporaries. He had been held up to ridicule by Buckingham; he had been the butt of epigram, satire, and invective from Crowne, Settle, Shadwell, and a mob of literary ruffians; he had been beaten in Rose Alley by Rochester's myrmidons; he had been twitted by the courtiers on account of his Puritan kindred; he had been reviled by the Puritans for his adherence to the court. He was not, as we have seen, of an impetuous temperament; but he had not the less a lively sense of injuries, and he probably saw that with one weapon alone he could efficiently requite them. The offences of the time were rank: the old antagonism of parties was reviving; plots and rumours of plots pervaded and dislocated all classes of society; and the leaders of parties were, with few exceptions, hypocrites in religion or profligates in conduct. The decorum which veiled the excesses of Versailles was disregarded in London; vice stalked abroad unbanned and unmasked; and the enormities of Domitian's reign seemed to be repeated in that of Charles II.

It is scarcely possible that so shrewd an observer as Dryden proved himself to be should not have brooded over this chaos, and laid up in his private meditations the plan and weapons of assault long before he opened the campaign. He had beheld, moreover, a sort of rehearsal of his new career performed by puny and clumsy debutants. Shadwell, Settle, and some other minor poets let out their pens to the Whigs: Lee, Otway, and Tate were in the pay of the Tories. The controversies of the age, which, after long political stagnation, at first

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

threatened to revive old Puritan and Cavalier feuds, had suddenly concentrated themselves on two points, the Popish plot and the succession of the Crown. The Tories and Catholics maintained the right of the lawful heir, James, Duke of York: the Whigs and Protestants, impelled by Shaftesbury, were fain to put up with a paltry shadow, who had no recommendations beyond his graceful address and handsome person. Under King Monmouth, Shaftesbury could not have missed being Mayor of the palace; and he had the art to persuade the public that in Monmouth alone were bound up the last hopes of their civil and religious liberties. There has probably never been a more worthless controversy than that which at this time divided the English nation. But its very worthlessness afforded the most abundant and appropriate materials for satire, and into this Dryden, in November, 1681, plunged with the whole force and fervour of his genius—a knight paladin, suddenly taking part in the squabbles of village clowns.

Independent of the merits of its execution, of which we shall speak more at large, Dryden in this production has a just claim to the praise of originality. He quitted the beaten track of satire, which, since the time of Lucilius, had lashed the vices and follies of classes and individuals, and he aimed his shafts at the great political questions, parties, and leaders of the day. He performed in verse the most difficult task of prose history,—the delineation of the principal actors on the political stage,—and performed it with such vigour and vivacity that his “characters” still remain the admitted types of Shaftesbury, Buckingham, Oates, Seymour, and Mon-

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

mouth. Burnet, Roger North, Hume, and, in our own days, Macaulay, owe no mean portion of their reputation to the skill with which they depict the men who have guided our counsels or our armies; but the most finished of their portraits are faint and defective when compared with the bold outline and vivid colours of Dryden. It must be owned, indeed, that his commendations are less successful than his censure, and that his character of Amiel — Sir Edward Seymour — is much less precisely cut and polished than those of Zimri, Zerah, or Achitophel. In the three latter, every stroke tells; every stroke is an addition to the likeness; every stroke is made at the right moment, and in the right place, and can no more be transposed or omitted than the lines and shadows of Holbein's or Titian's portraits. The age of Charles II, indeed, owes little less to Dryden's pen than the age of Charles I does to Van Dyck's easel.

As Poet Laureate, Dryden's side in this controversy was marked out for him. It was the side also of his predilections, for in his plays he had maintained ultra-loyal opinions, and in his numerous essays and dedications had even paraded his Toryism. "Absalom and Achitophel" failed, indeed, in its immediate object, of turning the tide of opinion against Shaftesbury; but it undoubtedly produced a powerful effect on the public. It was read with avidity; it passed through five editions in one year; and it established Dryden's reputation as the most formidable of antagonists, and the most effective of pleaders in verse.

He did not loiter in the course which he had now so

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

happily commenced; but his next efforts were, on the whole, less successful. Their inferiority was in some measure owing to the more restricted nature of their subjects. "The Medal: a Satire against Sedition," appeared in March, 1682. It was prompted by the popular enthusiasm at Shaftesbury's acquittal. But even Shaftesbury, the most versatile and conspicuous man of the time, could not singly afford substance for a poem, and "The Medal" falls much below its predecessor in interest. It was followed by "Mac Flecknoe," in the same year; and although its hero, Shadwell, was even less calculated than Shaftesbury to bring out the full powers of Dryden's mind, scarcely one of his poems is nearer perfection. Of the four hundred lines in "Mac Flecknoe," a few are coarse and ribaldrous, but none are feeble or careless; and in this satire, as in his former, the author opened a new vein, and afforded more than a hint to the "Dunciad," the "Rosciad," and the "Pursuits of Literature."

The second part of "Absalom and Achitophel" appeared in November, 1682, and in a few days was followed by the "Religio Laici." This year may accordingly be regarded as the *Annus Mirabilis* of Dryden's own life. His patent of perpetual remembrance was then signed and sealed. The continuation of "Absalom and Achitophel" was indeed, in the main, written by Nahum Tate; but Dryden had found an apt pupil in this translator of the Psalms, and not only revised his copy, but strengthened its occasional lines, and drew with his own hand the portraits of Settle and Shadwell.

In the same year, although he had now ceased to

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

write for the stage, he brought out his "Duke of Guise," which must be reckoned among his political productions, since the parallel between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England was obvious, and the evident purpose of this tragedy was to maintain the rights of the Duke of York.

Dryden now stood at the highest pinnacle of royal and courtly favour. He had rendered to his Sovereign and to the heir of the Crown such services as no other living author could have afforded: he had made himself pre-eminently obnoxious to the Protestant party, and had offended the Whigs past forgiveness. And yet, at the very moment when his name stood highest whether for praise or blame, the poet himself was suffering from pecuniary embarrassments. The promises of advancement which were made to him ended with the breath that uttered them; his salary as Laureate remained unpaid for four years; and when, after earnest and repeated solicitations, he obtained in May, 1684, an order on the Treasury for the payment of arrears, it was only for one quarter's salary due at Midsummer, 1680, and he received fifty pounds in lieu of eight hundred. Herringman, the bookseller, had been a better paymaster than Charles Stuart, who, while he withheld from Dryden his due, was squandering thousands of pounds upon his mistresses and favourites. There was, indeed, an ineradicable vein of shabbiness in all the Stuart monarchs of England. James defrauded Raleigh of his estate in Somersetshire, because, forsooth, the land was wanted for Carr; Ben Jonson's pension was grudgingly paid, and sometimes withheld altogether; and the distinguished

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

servants of the court had reason to envy the men on whom they looked down "as base mechanicals," for *they* at least received the wages of their service. No single writer of the time had done more to render the Puritans hateful and ridiculous than the author of "Hudibras." Upon his unrivalled burlesque he had lavished stores of learning hardly inferior in amount to those expended upon their majestic poems by Dante and Milton. "Hudibras" was read by all men, quoted by all men, and raised inextinguishable laughter in all men; while the writer of it was often puzzled to procure for himself a roof, bread, and raiment. He received, after he had ceased to want anything, a monument and an epitaph; and the contrast between the misery of his life and the respect paid to his memory was recorded in an epigram, of which the point is its literal truth:—

"Whilst Butler, needy wretch, was yet alive,
No generous patron would a dinner give:
See him, when starved to death and turned to dust,
Presented with a monumental bust.
The poet's fate is here in emblem shown,
He asked for bread and he received a stone."

Dryden, although not reduced to Butler's straits, was nearly in an equal degree with him the victim of royal neglect. It appears indeed from a document, published for the first time by Mr. Bell, that in 1684 an additional pension of a hundred pounds a year was bestowed upon him. We doubt whether either the addition or the arrears of the former salary were ever paid him. In his "Threnodia Augustalis," a Pindaric ode which he composed as Laureate upon the death of his

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

most sacred majesty Charles II, he intimates that poets, "like birds of Paradise, fed on morning dew," from lack of more substantial nutriment. James II indeed, after a while, opened his purse to the bard who had maintained his right to the throne at a season when "no man cried, God bless him," and when he was the most unpopular man in the three kingdoms. But this liberality did not come with the king's accession: on the contrary, Dryden's fortunes seemed to be rather impaired than improved by that event. He retained his Laureateship, indeed, and the original salary; and to have deprived Dryden of them would have been an act of ingratitude in James beyond even the ingratitude of a Stuart. But in the new patent no mention was made of the additional hundred pounds; and even the annual butt of sherry was discontinued. The king apparently expected from these harsh terms to so useful a servant that Dryden would understand the inconsistency of a Popish king keeping a Protestant poet. The hint seems to have been taken; for, in March, 1685-6, Dryden received an additional hundred pounds a year, and the Romish Church one convert more.

We are not disposed, even if the coincidence be more than accidental, to judge Dryden harshly on account of his sudden conversion. He had been bred a Puritan in the household of one of the chiefest of saints; he had conformed, without exciting comment or censure from the world, to the Church of England; but whatever may have been his real sentiments, the grossness of his dramatic writings forbids us to suppose that his religious convictions were at any time very deep. We believe him

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

to have been, in the main, a very amiable man, but there is no appearance of his having ever been a devout Protestant. He was of the faith of the State, and probably thought that what its defender and his lords spiritual and temporal held, or professed to hold, was truth enough for a poet, whose bread depended upon his panegyrics and his popularity. He intimates indeed pretty broadly, in his "Hind and Panther," that he took his religion, even after his conversion to Romanism, pretty much on trust; ¹ and if Dryden were at any period

¹ "By education most have been misled:
So they believe because they so were bred:
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man."

of his life earnest in his creed, it was certainly when he wrote the "Life of Saint Francis Xavier," and not when he wrote his "Spanish Friar."

The only poem of Dryden's which savours of attachment to the Church of England is the "Religio Laici," produced early in 1673, rather more than twelve months after the appearance of "Absalom and Achitophel." This is a statement in metre of the reasons of his belief in the church as by law established, and does not seem intended to serve any political purpose. But the weight of this statement is considerably lessened by an examination of the poem itself. It is an argument in verse, terse, logical, and epigrammatic. The most prominent portrait in it, however, is adopted from Chaucer, and the argument tends more to inculcate a sound moral life and its practical duties than any especial reasons for preferring the doctrines and discipline of the Anglican

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

establishment. If it were meant for any immediate purpose, and not merely as an exercise in metrical ratiocination, it was probably intended as an answer to those who accused the ex-Puritan and present Conformist of having no theological creed at all.

Dryden's improved salary was earned by increased energy in the service of his royal and not very munificent patron. In defence of James he attacked the most skilful and experienced pamphleteers of the day. He shrunk from crossing swords neither with Stillingfleet, though armed at all points with ecclesiastical lore, nor with Burnet, clothed in worldly and diplomatic cunning, as with triple brass. He was Maitre Jaques cook, and Maitre Jaques coachman to the king; he defended in prose and in verse the most flagrant and insane measures of the government; he was neither alarmed by the counsels of Father Petre, nor disgusted by the servility of Rochester. His poem of the "Hind and Panther" is on all accounts an extraordinary production. Its wit is sharp and pleasant, its diction singularly harmonious, its reasoning coherent and impressive, and as an *ex parte* statement it scarcely admits of improvement. It is indeed now less known, because its interest is of a less historical kind than that of "Absalom and Achitophel," but at the moment it appeared its Romanist readers must have hailed it as the work of a poetical Bossuet, and expected from it either the conversion or the confusion of their opponents.

To ourselves, indeed, perusing this polemical apology without fear or favour of the controversy, its defects as a work of art are but too palpable. The

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

allegory and the fable are throughout awkwardly blended. We do not indeed

"Ask Jean Jacques Rousseau,
If beasts confabulate or no,"

but however expressive or acceptable it may have been to contemporaries, whose passions were excited by the controversy, to calmer judgements the features of the allegory appear repulsive. We can follow with patience Swift's delineation of Peter, Martin, and Jack: they are at least human personages, and, with allowance for their symbolical attributes, have some human interest. But it is a stretch beyond the bounds of fiction or allegory to follow the mazes of a controversy conducted by animals alone. There are few more insufferable apologies than Casti's "Animali Parlanti," and Dryden's "Hind and Panther" is liable to equal objections. The Church of Rome is figured under the similitude of a milk-white hind, ever in peril of death, yet not doomed to destruction. All the baser animals are bent on her destruction — the Socinian fox, the Presbyterian wolf, the Independent bear, the Anabaptist boar. The timorous neutrals are typified by the cowardly hare; the Church of England by the panther, beautiful but spotted. They are equally hated by their common foes, and confer apart on their common danger; and the subjects of their conference are the Real Presence, the jurisdiction of popes and councils, the Test Acts, the penal laws, Oates's perjuries, the ingratitude of the Cavalier party to the author of "Hudibras," Burnet's intrigues and Stillingfleet's pamphlets — *quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi*.

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Such an allegory could not be preserved for ten lines together with any chance of consistency. Its absurdity is obvious: its weariness fatal. Yet the skill of the author is as conspicuous as the defects of the plan. The "Hind and Panther" is not only the most remarkable literary production of the reign of James II, but is also second to none of Dryden's works in energy, harmony, and pathos.

The defects of this extraordinary poem were overlooked by the party whom it was intended to serve, but presented an ample scope for the invective and irony of their opponents. Its ingenious casuistry and melodious numbers could not protect it from attacks. Men were in no humour for such attempts to make the worse appear the better reason. The spots of the panther might be blemishes, but the whiteness of the hind was an insidious mask, and an actual fraud. It had been more than once or twice incarnadined in the blood of the saints; it was the livery of priestly guile and political tyranny. Rejoinder and invective flew from all sides. The nicknames of "Bayes" and "Squab" were revived; the author was branded with the titles of infidel and apostate. The panegyric to Cromwell was printed beside the "Astræa Redux"; Shadwell discharged his venom and Settle his dulness. There was an "arrowy sleet" of pamphlets; there were hints that Rochester's cudgel had been well bestowed on the broad shoulders of "Poet Squab." But of the many satirical responses which appeared, that which most deeply affected Dryden was the joint production of two young men who had recently quitted Cambridge. He could put up with

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

the venal or envious sarcasms of ordinary libellers, but he was cut to the quick by the wit of Charles Montague and Matthew Prior. They were both young men and friends of Dryden, whose society they enjoyed in the literary coffee-houses of London. If we may credit Dean Lockier's authority, he was moved to tears by their fable of the "Country and City Mouse." He observed, "For two young fellows that I have always been very civil to, to use an old man in so cruel a manner!" He had been patient under Collier's rebuke, and disdained Martin Clifford's and Tom Brown's "Reflections." He was sitting where such ordinary scribes dare not soar. But Prior and Montague belonged to a different order of assailants. They had the ear of good society; they were rising favourites of the public, and held in the clubs a voice nearly as potential as Dryden himself. He may justly have begun to suspect that he had miscalculated the direction of public opinion when even the frequenters of his realm at Will's Coffee-House conspired against him. Court favour might be purchased too dear if it involved the loss of hardly-won popularity.

His tenure of court favour was, however, destined to be brief. Within little more than a year after the publication of the "Hind and Panther," within a few months after the appearance of his "Britannia Rediviva," — in which poem he had congratulated James and his Queen on the birth of a prince, — the Romanist religion was proscribed in this realm, and the sovereign, his consort, and their infant were exiles, dependent on the charity of the French monarch. Dryden had committed himself so irretrievably to

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Popery, and had proved himself so formidable an antagonist of Protestantism under every form, that he could expect no favour, and scarcely forbearance, from the new dynasty. He had argued for the divine right of kings, and an elective monarch was seated on the throne. He had celebrated the birth of a genuine heir, and the baby prince was accounted by at least two thirds of the English people to be supposititious. Dryden was, in 1688, as much a mark for royal and parliamentary aversion as Milton had been in 1660. But he did not possess Milton's tower of strength. Cromwell's Latin secretary had maintained the cause of civil and religious freedom, and had sacrificed his eyesight to the "Defence of the English people." Dryden had been the advocate of civil and religious servitude, and had bartered for increase of pay his genius and former reputation. He had no pretensions to favour or forbearance. In August, 1689, he was deprived of his offices of Poet-Laureate and Historiographer Royal, with the further vexation of seeing them bestowed upon his old antagonist, the true-blue Protestant versifier, Shadwell. The latter end of Job was indeed worse than the beginning; for whereas, while Dryden wrote dedications, translations, and occasional poems in the service of Herringman, and plays for Davenant's theatre, he was merely a literary aspirant, with the world of letters before him, where to choose, now, in 1689, he, the most conspicuous of writers, had rendered himself one of the most obnoxious of courtiers, and unluckily taken sides with a church which the nation abhorred, and with a king whom the nation rejected.

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

The appointment of Shadwell to the laureateship did not contribute to the literary credit of the government. A fat and bibulous harper rather disgraced than adorned King Arthur's court and table; and Dryden, although changed and fallen, was a greater man, even in popular estimation, in his obscure dwelling in Gerard Street, than Shadwell with his laurels at Whitehall.

Deprived of his pension, Dryden had now his stout heart, his active brain, and his ready right hand to rely upon for his support. He was flung to the ground, but he rose the stronger from the contact. He rebounded with the elasticity of youth from a complication of calamities that would have paralyzed most men. We begin to hold him in highest respect when to all appearance he had sunk the lowest. His remaining years were devoted to a variety of labours, prodigious in quantity, and yet more remarkable for the vigour and elasticity of mind which they displayed.

The concluding decennium of his career was, indeed, the most honourable of his literary life. He had risen to fame and favour by writing insincere panegyrics and plays of more than questionable morality. The spirit of the age was servile, unprincipled, and profligate; and he had ministered to its servility, its laxity, and its licence, as much as any writer of the time. He had abused great gifts; he had followed corrupt fashions in literature; with the strength of Hercules he had wielded the distaff of Omphale. He was now thrown upon his own resources once again; he was now verging to the sere and yellow leaf of his years; he again sought his Mæce-

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

nas among the booksellers, only exchanging Herringman for Tonson. In the first instance he had recourse to the stage, which he had relinquished for the preceding seven years. In the space of three years (1690-3), he produced two tragedies, two comedies, and an opera, and, with the exception of his last drama, "Love Triumphant," which was a signal failure, all these pieces met with complete success. It is impossible not to applaud the gallant way in which he confronted envy and opposition. It is impossible not to admire the freshness of his intellectual powers and the manifold resources at his command. He condescended to write dedications and elegiac poems, prologues and epilogues, to translate, to paraphrase, to do task-work and job-work for all who could afford to pay him. The Earl of Abingdon applied to him for a poem upon his deceased wife, as he applied to a sculptor for her monument; and for his verses entitled "Eleonora" Dryden received from his employer five hundred pounds. He collected and published his translations of the Greek and Latin poets; he rendered into English verse Juvenal and Persius. He commenced, in 1694, the most arduous of his labours, the translation of Virgil, and completed it by the close of 1696. It was published in the following July, and in August appeared the most popular of his poems, the "Ode on Alexander's Feast." Age could not, it seemed, stale, nor variety wither him; with advancing years his powers were strengthened and his imagination became more alert.

The expectation excited by his "Virgil" showed that the cloud of unpopularity had passed away. The hire-

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

ling and convert of the expelled dynasty was after all a sturdy and invincible man, whom the fate of nations and the fall of thrones might supplant, but could not permanently depress. The nation, as Dr. Johnson remarks, seemed to consider its honour interested in the work. Dryden received assistance from all who could aid him in its performance. Mr. Gilbert Dolben presented him with as many editions of the original as he could procure; Addison furnished him with an essay on the "Georgics," and with arguments of the books of the "Æneid." It was believed that the king would have accepted the dedication of the work, at least Jacob Tonson thought so, and directed the engraver of the plates to depict the pious Æneas with the prominent nose of William of Orange. But upon this point Dryden was inexorable. He had never recanted his Panegyric on the Great Protector; he refused now to burn incense upon the altar of the Dutch Jupiter. The "Dedication" of Virgil was inscribed with the names of three patrons, for which the author incurred the coarse vituperation of Jonathan Swift.

And as if this stupendous labour — which he says in a letter to Jacob Tonson "would require seven years to perform exactly" — had only nerved Dryden for fresh employments, he contemplated in 1698 the translation of Homer. He thought that "in his fiery way of writing," he could do the "Iliad" more justice than the "Æneid." He finished one book of the "Tale of Troy Divine," but was diverted from this enterprise by a new engagement with Tonson. This was the volume of "Fables" from Chaucer and Boccaccio, on which Dryden's renown

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

as a narrative poet mainly rests. We so far subscribe to the general opinion that these adaptations of the great Italian and English *conteurs* display uncommon vigour, but we cannot assent to Mr. Bell's judgement, that they display a richer vein of fancy and more sweetness and grace than any of his numerous earlier works. It has always appeared to us, on the contrary, that in Dryden's hands, Boccaccio becomes prolix and Chaucer prosaic. Indeed, there are more serious objections to Dryden's "Fables" than any which can be raised on the score of taste. He has added to the indecencies of the Florentine, and rendered the simplicity of the "Canterbury Tales" vulgar and coarse.

As Dryden's poetical reputation is grounded in some measure upon the spirited narrative of this volume of "Fables," we will pause for a moment upon a few passages in them, as compared with the corresponding portions in the original, in order to bring our censure to the test.

We will commence with that most charming of descriptions, the May-morning, and Emily doing observance to the season.

Chaucer wrote:—

"Thus passeth year by year and day by day,
Till it fell onè in a morrow of May,
That Emily, that fairer was to seen
Than is the lily upon his stalkè green,
And fresher than the May with flowres new,
For with the rosè-colour strove her hue
(I n'ot which was the finer of them two)
Ere it was day, as she was wont to do,
She was arisen, and already dight,
For May will have no sluggardy a-night:

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

The season pricketh every gentle heart,
And maketh him out of his sleep to start,
And saith, Arise! and do thine observance."

But Dryden writes:—

"Thus year by year they pass and day by day,
Till once ('t was on the morn of cheerful May)
The young Emilia fairer to be seen,
Than the fair lily on the flowery green,
More fresh than May herself in blossoms new,
(For with the rosy colour strove her hue)
Walked, as her custom was, before the day
To do th' observance due to sprightly May;
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep;
Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves:
Inspires new flames, revives extinguished loves."

"Bless thee, Chaucer, thou art translated" from a most loyal and observant painter of fresh and delicate nature into a dealer in rhymes "done to this pattern." Philemon Holland, the translator-general, as men called him on account of his versions of so many bulky ancients, never made a rougher piece of work than Dryden has done, with the passage generally, and in changing

"Than is the lily upon his stalkè green,"

into

"Than the fair lily on the flowery green."

But Dryden, it may be said, was not the man for drawing from nature, or penning amorous ditties all a summer's day. Let him then be tried with something of sterner mood.

Chaucer thus describes "The Temple of Mars":—

"First on the wall was painted a Forést
In which there wonneth neither man nor beast,

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

With knotty, gnarry, barren trees old
Of stubbès sharp and hideous to behold;
In which there ran a rumble and a swough
As though a storm would bursten every bough.
And downward from a hill under a bent
There stood the temple of Mars armipotent,
Wrought all of burnisht steel, of which th' entry
Was long and strait, and ghastly for to see;
And thereout came a rage and such a vise
That it made all the gatès for to rise;
The northern light in at the doorè shone
For window on the wall ne was there none
Through which men mighten any light discern"; —

whereas Dryden's "Temple of Mars" might have been
"turned out" at Birmingham: —

"The landscape was a forest wide and bare;
Where neither beast nor human kind repair;
The fowl, that scent afar, the borders fly,
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly stubs, instead of trees are found;
Or woods with knots and gnars deformed and old,
Headless the most and hideous to behold:
A rattling tempest through the branches went
That stripped them bare, and one sole way they bent.
Heaven froze above severe, the clouds congeal,
And through the crystal vault appeared the standing hail:
Such was the face without; a mountain stood
Threatening from high, and overlooked the wood.
Beneath the low'ring brow and on a bent,
The temple stood of Mars armipotent;
The frame of burnished steel, that cast a glare
From far, and seemed to thaw the freezing air.
A strait long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls, and horror over-head:
Thence issued such a blast and hollow roar,
As threatened from the hinge to heave the door;
In, through that door, a northern light there shone,
"T was all it had, for windows there were none."

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

One line will serve as a sample of the transfiguration of this noble description of Chaucer's into "sound and fury" by Dryden, and then we will desist from the ungracious task of comparing the rhetorical poet with one of nature's making. Dryden's

"*Woods* with knots and gnars deformed and old"

seem to hint that the cabinet-maker might get a table out of them — but "a Forest"

"With knotty, gnarry, barren trees old"

is a description befitting the grove of the Eumenides.

We are disposed to think that Jacob Tonson got the worst of the bargain, though Dryden threw in seventeen hundred verses over and above the number stipulated for in the contract. The sale of the "Fables" was extremely slow; even the author's death, which has often accelerated a lingering impression, did not increase the demand for them, and a second edition was not called for until 1713. We are less surprised at the tardiness of the sale at first than at the reputation which these Tales have acquired since.

The labours of Dryden were now fast approaching their close. Although his mental powers were unimpaired, he had long been suffering the penalties of the sedentary, and was afflicted with both gout and gravel; and in December, 1699, erysipelas showed itself in one of his legs. Yet amid his intervals of ease he continued to write with unremitting diligence and fortitude, and within a few weeks of his death produced his "Secular Masque"; a Prologue and Epilogue for the revival of

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

Fletcher's comedy of the "Pilgrim"; and a "Dialogue in the Madhouse between two Distracted Lovers." His career ended with a dramatic and a satirical composition. The "Secular Masque" is an allegorical delineation of the reigns of the three Stuart kings, under the respective influences of Diana, Mars, and Venus. In the Prologue he brayed Blackmore in a mortar, but the Knight was as indestructible as Dulness itself, and survived for the recreation of younger wits. In the Epilogue, he attacked his old adversary Collier, but with so much forbearance that this parting tap from the greatest master of fence bears more the appearance of courtesy than of censure.

To a shattered frame and a corpulent habit the slightest accident is often fatal. A neglected inflammation became a gangrene, for which amputation of the limb was pronounced the only cure. But Dryden refused to submit to the operation, saying that "he was an old man, and had not long to live by course of nature, and therefore did not care to part with one limb, at such an age, to preserve an uncomfortable life on the rest." His patience was not put to a long trial. He expired at his house in Gerard Street, on the first of May, 1700, and his remains now repose in Westminster Abbey between the graves of Chaucer and Cowley, his earliest and his latest masters in verse.

We have dwelt upon the works and character of Dryden, not with the vain hope that he will ever again become a general favourite, or with the desire of extenuating or exaggerating defects. We believe indeed that in an earlier or a later age his faults would have

DRYDEN AND HIS TIMES

been infinitely fewer, and his name might have ranked second only to the very first. It was his peculiar misfortune to have fallen upon evil times, and to have lacked strength of will to resist their influence. In an earlier age he would perhaps have rescued King Arthur from Blackmore's clutches, and added a national epic poem to our literature: in a later, he would have taken a high station as an historian or a critic. But though these great prizes were denied to him, and two thirds of his numerous writings have become obsolete, his indefatigable industry, his various knowledge, his robust eloquence, and his unsurpassed powers of satire will always entitle his name to respect, and afford motives, wherever English literature is cultivated, for cherishing the healthier and happier portions of both his verse and prose. The genius, indeed, displayed in his best works indicates powers never fully developed by their owner, or opportunities never placed within his reach; and if it be allowed to infer from what he actually wrote that, under happier circumstances, he would have written otherwise; if we regard him, for a moment, as contemporary either with Ben Jonson, on the one hand, or with Thomson, Goldsmith, and Gray, on the other, we shall not refuse to admit that of all Pope's most appropriate epithets, not one is more expressive or more mournful than that which he has prefixed to the name of John Dryden, —

“Unhappy Dryden! — in all Charles's days,
Roscommon only boasts unspotted lays.”

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

THERE are many, and those not the least powerful thinkers and efficient workers amongst us, who are prone to underrate critical research into ancient modes of life and forms of thought, alleging that what it behoves us chiefly to ascertain is the truth which comes home to men's business and bosoms in these our days, and not bygone speculations and beliefs which we can never fully comprehend, and with which we can only yet more imperfectly sympathize. Holding, with Auguste Comte, that theological and metaphysical speculation have reached their limit, and that the only hope of extending man's sources of knowledge and happiness is to be found in positive science, and in the universal application of its principles, they urge that the thinkers who are in the van of human progress should devote their energies to the actual rather than to the retrospective.

There is, undeniably, truth in this view. It is better to discover and apply improved methods of draining our own towns than to be able to quote Aristophanes in proof that the streets of Athens were in a state of unmacadamized muddiness; better to reason justly on some point of immediate concern than to know the fallacies of the ancient sophists; better to look with "awful eye" at the starry heavens, and, under the teaching of Newton and Herschel, feel the immensity,

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

the order, the sublimity of the universe, and of the forces by which it subsists, than to pore over the grotesque symbols whereby the Assyrian or Egyptian shadowed forth his own more vague impression of the same great facts. But it would be a very serious mistake to suppose that the study of the past and the labours of criticism have no important practical bearing on the present.

• Our civilization, and, yet more, our religion, are an anomalous blending of lifeless barbarisms, which have descended to us like so many petrifications from distant ages, with living ideas, the offspring of a true process of development. We are in bondage to terms and conceptions which, having had their root in conditions of thought no longer existing, have ceased to possess any vitality, and are for us as spells which have lost their virtue. The endeavour to spread enlightened ideas is perpetually counteracted by these *idola theatri*, which have allied themselves, on the one hand with men's better sentiments, and on the other with institutions in

• whose defence are arrayed the passions and the interests of dominant classes. Now, though the teaching of positive truth is the grand means of expelling error, the process will be very much quickened if the negative argument serve as its pioneer; if, by a survey of the past, it can be shown how each age and each race has had a faith and a symbolism suited to its need and its stage of development, and that for succeeding ages to dream of retaining the spirit along with the forms of the past is as futile as the embalming of the dead body in the

• hope that it may one day be resumed by the living soul.

But apart from this objective utility of critical re-

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

search it has certain highly advantageous influences on the mind which pursues it. There is so far justice in the common sarcasms against men of erudition *par excellence* that they have rarely been distinguished for warmth of moral sympathy or for fertility and grandeur of conception; but your eminently practical thinker is often beset by a narrowness of another kind. It may be doubted whether a mind which has no susceptibility to the pleasure of changing its point of view, of mastering a remote form of thought, of perceiving identity of nature under variety of manifestation, — a perception which resembles an expansion of one's own being, a pre-existence in the past, — can possess the flexibility, the ready sympathy, or the tolerance which characterizes a truly philosophic culture. Now and then, however, we meet with a nature which combines the faculty for amassing minute erudition with the largeness of view necessary to give it a practical bearing; a high appreciation of the genius of antiquity, with a profound belief in the progressive character of human development — in the eternal freshness of the founts of inspiration; a wonderful intuition of the mental conditions of past ages, with an ardent participation in the most advanced ideas and most hopeful efforts of the present; a nature like some mighty river, which, in its long windings through unfrequented regions, gathers mineral and earthy treasures only more effectually to enrich and fertilize the cultivated valleys and busy cities which form the habitation of man.

Of such a nature, with valuable qualities thus “anti-thetically mixt,” we have evidence in the work before

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

us. It exhibits an industry in research which reminds us of Cudworth, and for which, in recent literature, we must seek a parallel in Germany rather than in England, while its philosophy and its aims are at once lofty and practical. Scattered through its more abstruse disquisitions we find passages of pre-eminent beauty — gems into which are absorbed the finest rays of intelligence and feeling. We believe Mr. Mackay's work is unique in its kind. England has been slow to use or to emulate the immense labours of Germany in the departments of mythology and biblical criticism; but when once she does so, the greater solidity and directness of the English mind ensure a superiority of treatment.

The series of subjects which Mr. Mackay has chosen as way-marks in tracing the "Progress of the Intellect," are — after an introductory chapter on Intellectual Religion — Ancient Cosmogony; the Metaphysical Idea of God; the Moral Notion of God; the Theory of Meditation; the Hebrew Theory of Retribution and Immortality; the Messianic Theory; Christian Forms and Forms; and Speculative Christianity. In the introductory dissertation on Intellectual Religion, he develops his view concerning the true basis and character of religion and morals, and the relation between ancient and modern ideas on these subjects, and it is perhaps here that he presents himself to the greatest advantage; this preliminary chapter is a sort of lofty, airy vestibule, in which we gather breath and courage to descend with the author into the crypts of citation and conjecture into which he is about to introduce us. It is Mr. Mackay's faith that divine revelation is not contained exclusively

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

or pre-eminently in the facts and inspirations of any one age or nation, but is coextensive with the history of human development, and is perpetually unfolding itself to our widened experience and investigation, as firmament upon firmament becomes visible to us in proportion to the power and range of our exploring instruments. The master-key to this revelation is the recognition of the presence of undeviating law in the material and moral world — of that invariability of sequence which is acknowledged to be the basis of physical science, but which is still perversely ignored in our social organization, our ethics and our religion. It is this invariability of sequence which can alone give value to experience and render education in the true sense possible. The divine yea and nay, the seal of prohibition and of sanction, are effectually impressed on human deeds and aspirations, not by means of Greek and Hebrew, but by that inexorable law of consequences, whose evidence is confirmed instead of weakened as the ages advance; and human duty is comprised in the earnest study of this law and patient obedience to its teaching. While this belief sheds a bright beam of promise on the future career of our race, it lights up what once seemed the dreariest region of history with new interest; every past phase of human development is part of that education of the race in which we are sharing; every mistake, every absurdity into which poor human nature has fallen, may be looked on as an experiment of which we may reap the benefit. A correct generalization gives significance to the smallest detail, just as the great in-

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

ductions of geology demonstrate in every pebble the working of laws by which the earth has become adapted for the habitation of man. In this view religion and philosophy are not merely conciliated, they are identical; or rather, religion is the crown and consummation of philosophy — the delicate corolla, which can only spread out its petals in all their symmetry and brilliance to the sun when root and branch exhibit the conditions of a healthy and vigorous life. Mr. Mackay's preliminary chapter has an independent value, and would be read with interest by many who might not care to follow him in his subsequent inquiry. The dilemma of sensuousness and sentimentalism is thus excellently put: ¹ —

“Religion often appears to be a mere sentiment, because the reason by which it should be disciplined requires long cultivation, and can only gradually assume its proper prominence and dignity. The faculties are seldom combined in its avowed service; and from its consequent misdirection has been inferred the impossibility of finding within the limits of the mind an effectual religious guide. It has even been said that religion has properly nothing to do with the head, but is exclusively an exercise of the heart and feelings; that all the teaching or education which can properly be called ‘religious’ consists ‘in the formation of the temper and behaviour, the infusing of devotional feeling, and the implanting of Christian principles.’ In other words, the highest faculty of the mind is not required in the service of Him who bestowed it. Through this narrow view the sentiments are over-excited; the judgement becomes pro-

¹ Sec. 3, p. 9.

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

portionately languid and incapable, the connection between the theory of practice and duty is unobserved, and dogmas are blindly learned without regard to their origin or meaning. Superficial religion has everywhere the same result; it fluctuates between the extremes of sensibility and superstition, and exhibits in this respect a curious parallel to the analogous catastrophe of natural philosophy. The uneducated feeling has only the alternative of unquestioning credulity, or of sacrificing and abrogating itself. This is the universal dilemma of artificial creeds; their votaries divide into formalists and sceptics, Pharisees and Sadducees; Calvinism, in our own days, has swung back to rationalism, and the symbolical forms of ancient religion are pronounced by a competent observer to have generally led to these extremes.¹ The passage is easy from one to the other. The devotional feeling of a Catholic of the middle age might have been destroyed if the doctrines of Copernicus or Galileo had induced him to mistrust the infallibility of the Pope; and in the days of Sir Thomas Browne it may have been correct to say that a disbelief in witchcraft implied 'a sort of atheism.' Horace was startled out of his irreligious philosophy by a clap of thunder; but if a heathen who saw an angry Hecate in the eclipsed moon could have understood a modern almanack, he might at once have fallen into the impiety from which Horace was a convert "

Admirable again is the section on Faith, from which we cannot resist giving a long extract: ² —

"Religion and science are inseparable. No object in

¹ Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, chap. 67.

² Vol. i, p. 35.

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

nature, no subject of contemplation is destitute of a religious tendency and meaning. If religion be made to consist only in traditional and legendary forms, it is of course as distinguishable from science as the Mosaic cosmogony from geology; but if it be the *ascensio mentis in Deum per scalas creaturarum rerum*, the evolving the grounds of hope, faith, and duty from the known laws of our being and the constitution of the universe, a religion may be said to include science as its minister, and antiquity, which beheld a divinity in all things, erred only in mistaking its intelligible character, and in making it a mere matter of mystic speculation. In a more limited sense, religion may be contrasted with science, as something beyond and above it, as beginning where science ends, and as a guide through the realms of the unknown. But the known and the unknown are intimately connected and correlative. A superstructure of faith can be securely built only on the foundations of the known. Philosophy and religion have one common aim; they are but different forms of answer to the same great question — that of man and his destination. . . . Faith is, to a great extent, involuntary; it is a law or faculty of our nature, operating silently and intuitively to supply the imperfections of our knowledge. The boundary between faith and knowledge is, indeed, hard to distinguish. We are said to know our own impressions; to believe in their reality, or in the existence of an external cause of them. It follows that the immediate as well as the more remote inferences from phenomena are the blended fruit of faith and knowledge; and that though faith, properly speaking, is not knowledge, but the ad-

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

mission of certain inferences beyond knowledge, yet it is almost impossible, in tracing back the operations of the mind, to find any, even the most elementary, inference, which is not in some degree a compound of both, and which may not ultimately be resolved into a consistent belief in the results of experience. Faith being thus the inseparable companion and offspring of knowledge, is, like it, liable to modification and correction; that which we call our knowledge of the ultimate purpose of existence being, in fact, only a belief or inference from experience, which would lose its rational value if it were supposed to be so complete and infallible as to exempt us from the necessity of further reflection. All human knowledge must partake of the imperfection of the faculties through which it is derived; and the limited and unsatisfactory character of what we know leaves a wide and most important void to be filled up by our belief. But the more imperfect our knowledge, the more necessary it becomes to examine with suspicion the foundations of the faith so closely connected with it. Faith, as opposed to credulity, and to that blind submission to inexplicable power which usurped its name in the ancient East, is an allegiance of the reason; and as the 'evidence of things unseen' stands on the verge of mysticism, its value must depend on the discretion with which it is formed and used. Like all the other faculties, the belief requires to be educated; as the feet are taught to walk, the lips and tongue to speak, so the capacity of belief must be taught how to build securely, yet not arrogantly, on the data of experience. Faith is not that belief of Saint Augustine, whose merit increased

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

with the absurdity of the proposition, nor that which attributed to the instigation of God the real or projected murder of an only son. An irrational faith grew out of the opposite extreme of incredulity, when men refused to believe the truth, unless authenticated by sensuous evidence that confounded their understandings. True faith is a belief in things probable; it is the assigning to certain inferences a hypothetical objectivity, and upon the conscious acknowledgement of this hypothetical character alone depends its advantage over fanaticism, its moral value and dignity. Between the opposite risks of credulity and scepticism, it must be guided by those broad principles of reason which all the faculties require for their regulation. Reason alone can in each case determine where credulity begins, and fix the limit beyond which the mind should cease to assign even a qualified objectivity to its own imaginations. In its advanced stages faith is a legitimate result of the calculation of probabilities; it may transcend experience, but can never absolutely contradict it. Faith and knowledge tend mutually to the confirmation and enlargement of each other; faith by verification being often transformed into knowledge, and every increase of knowledge supplying a wider and firmer basis of belief. Faith, as an inference from knowledge, should be consistently inferred from the whole of knowledge; since, when estranged and violated, it loses its vitality, and the estrangement is as effectual when it is hastily and unfairly inferred as where it is wholly gratuitous. The same experience which is the source of knowledge being, therefore, the only legitimate foundation of faith,

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

a sound faith cannot be derived from the anomalous and exceptional. It is the avidity for the marvellous, and the morbid eagerness for a cheap and easy solution of the mysteries of existence — a solution supposed to be implied in the conception of an arbitrary and unintelligible rule, which has ever retarded philosophy and stultified religion. Faith naturally arises out of the regular and undeviating. The same unerring uniformity, which alone made experience possible, was also the first teacher of the invisible things of God. It is this

‘Elder Scripture, writ by God’s own hand,
Scripture authentic, uncorrupt by man,’

which is set before every one, without note or comment, and which even Holy Writ points out as the most unquestionable authority by which, both in heaven and earth, the will of God is interpreted to mankind. If man is not permitted to solve the problem of existence, he is at least emboldened to hope, and to infer so much from its actual conditions as to feel confident as to its results. Faith takes up the problem exactly where knowledge leaves it, and, as from confounding the objects of the two have arisen the discords of sects and the puzzles of philosophy, so the discovery of their true relations and limits enables the mind to reconcile and account for the controversies of the past, and in some measure to penetrate the mysteries that occasioned them.”

Having thus indicated the ground on which he takes his stand, Mr. Mackay commences his survey and delineation of religious development, selecting that of

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

the Hebrews and Greeks as the most typical and complete, and tracing it up to the period when the combination of the two modes of thought in the Alexandrian theosophy formed that web of metaphysical and religious dogma which constitutes speculative Christianity. While the Hebrew and Greek religions are his main subject, he has not neglected the copious illustration to be drawn from the Persian, the Hindoo, and the Northern mythologies, by indicating instances of analogy and of possible derivation, and thus the "Progress of the Intellect," is, perhaps, the nearest approach in our language to a satisfactory natural history of religion. The third chapter, on the Metaphysical Idea of God, is a rich mine of associated facts and ideas; but while admiring the range of learning which it exhibits, it is here that we begin to perceive the author's defects, or rather his redundances. Some of his pages read like extracts from his commonplace-book, which must be, as Southey said of his own, an urn under the arm of a river-god, rather than like a digested result of study, intended to inform the general reader. Only a devotedness of research such as his own can give interest and significance to the mass of allusions and particulars with which Mr. Mackay overlays, rather than illustrates, his more general passages, which are usually at once profound and lucid. The popular lecturer on science comes before his audience with a selection of striking and apt experiments in readiness, and is silent as to the morning's preparation in the laboratory; and so the scholar, who would produce a work of general utility, must not drag his

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

readers through the whole region of his own researches, but simply present them with an impressive *coup d'œil*. The occasional absence of this artistic working-up of materials diminishes the effectiveness of Mr. Mackay's admirable work.

The introduction of a truly philosophic spirit into the study of mythology — an introduction for which we are chiefly indebted to the Germans — is a great step in advance of the superficial Lucian-like tone of ridicule adopted by many authors of the eighteenth century, or the orthodox prepossessions of writers such as Bryant, who saw in the Greek legends simply misrepresentations of the authentic history given in the "Book of Genesis." The enlarged acquaintance with Hindoo literature and with the monumental records of other ancient nations which the last half-century has brought us has rendered more possible that wide comparison which is a requisite for all true, scientific generalization. O. Müller says, obviously enough, that if we possessed no other access to Grecian antiquity than its mythology, a systematic and philosophic explanation of the latter would be impossible; and so while the mythology of one nation is studied apart from that of others, or while what is really mythology in the records of any one nation is not recognized as such, but, though it presents the ordinary mythical elements, is accounted for by a special theory, we shall never arrive at a just and full estimate of this phase of man's religious tendencies.

Mr. Mackay holds, with Creuzer, that the basis of all mythology was a nature-worship; that "those interpreters are in the main right, who held that the heathen

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

Pantheon, in its infinite diversity of names and personifications, was but a multitudinous, though in its origin unconscious, allegory, of which physical phenomena, and principally the heavenly bodies, were the fundamental types." This primitive period of the myth, in which sacerdotal influence was in the ascendant, he thinks may be designated the Orphic or Cabiric, in distinction from the Epic period, which was characterized by a gradual merging of the mystic or religious feeling in the poetic. He says: "Between the lifelike Epic and the sombre Orphic style, between the picturesque and eventful romance, in which the gods are the mere machinery of a human drama, and the mystical symbols of theological metaphysics, there must have been many varieties in the treatment of religious legend, tending to reduce its fragmentary materials to the consistent and positive forms in which they are found in Homer." In this theory mythical conception, instead of being a step in advance of fetishism, is a decadence of the religious sentiment from that monotheistic or pantheistic impression to which it leaps by its first impulse; general ideas in the process of transmission, or simply as a necessary result of the laws of expression in the early stages of thought, resolve themselves into the crystalline forms of the legend. We will quote the author's own presentation of his opinion. Under the head of Relation of Monotheism to Symbolism, he says: —

"It is impossible to assume any period of time at which the vague sense of Deity ceased to be a mere feeling and assumed a specific form, or became an

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

'Idea.' The notion of external power must have been almost instantaneously associated with some external object; and the diversified reflections of the Divine easily came to be looked on as substantive and distinct divinities. But however infinite the variety of objects which helped to develop the notion of Deity, and eventually usurped its place, the notion itself was essentially a concentrated or monotheistic one. A vague monotheism resided in the earliest exertions of thought, being nearly identical with that impression of unity and connection in sensible phenomena which in its simplest form appears to rise independently of any effort of philosophical comparison. The power of generalization, or of seeing the one in the many, that first element both of science and of religion, is so nearly innate or instinctive as to have been termed by Plato a divine or Promethean gift; and the philosophical conception of the oneness of the universe and of its author, usually regarded as the last acquisition of civilization and reflection, appears to have been anticipated by a natural revelation, an indefinite dread of the aggregate of supersensuous nature, which is said to be common even among savages. In this indefinite feeling must be sought, if anywhere, that conceptional monotheism of primitive ages which, like the virtues of the golden age, makes every successive epoch, unless it be the present, appear only as a stage in the progress of degeneracy and aberration. The genius of religion . . . does not wait for the co-operation of science in order to commence her task; the powers of combination are at work long before the maturity of the reason eventually found necessary to

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

guide them; nay, the origin of religion, like that of civilization, may be said to be free from many of the corruptions attending its onward progress, which arise from the mind's inability to deal unembarrassed with the multitude of sensuous analogies. Generalization begins before a sufficient basis has been prepared to make it legitimate, and every successive step in the research into particulars seems to be in mysterious contradiction to the first hurried conclusion. Hence the universal blending of monotheism with polytheism, and the impossibility of discovering historically which of the two is older or more original."

Mr. Mackay's main proposition, that the substratum of religious symbolism was a worship or deification of the elements, is well sustained by the evidence; but he perhaps overstates the degree in which the monotheistic idea was originally coexistent with polytheistic personification. To the uncultured intellect, a plurality of divine agencies, analogous to the human, would seem, by their conflicting wills and influences, a natural explanation of physical and moral vicissitudes. As the impression of unity in nature gained force, these agencies would gradually become subordinate to a higher power, but that impression would at first be hardly more than a shadowy presentiment — one of those

"High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised."

That allegorical elements exist to a considerable extent in the divine, if not in the heroic myths of Greece, there is strong evidence, both presumptive and internal;

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

and the allegorical interpretation, on the lowest estimate of its soundness, is far superior to the pragmatic or semi-historical, which, in endeavouring to show a nucleus of fact in the myths, exhibits an utter blindness to the mental state in which they originated, and simply substitutes an unpoetical fable for a poetical one. But owing to the many-sidedness of all symbols, there is a peculiarly seductive influence in allegorical interpretation; and we observe that all writers who adopt it, though they set out with the largest admissions as to the spontaneous and unconscious character of mythical allegory, and the manifold modifications which have obscured it, acquire a sort of fanatical faith in their rule of interpretation, and fall into the mistake of supposing that the conscious allegorizing of a modern can be a correct reproduction of what they acknowledge to be unconscious allegorizing in the ancients. We do not see what unconscious allegory can mean, unless it be personification accompanied with belief, and with the spontaneous, vivid conception of a symbol, as opposed to the premeditated use of a poetical figure; and this belief would lead to an elaboration of the myth, in harmony rather with the attributed personality than with the true physical characteristics of the object personified. As a painter, in treating an allegorical subject, is led on by his artistic feeling to add one detail after another, until the specific idea with which he began becomes subordinate to the general effect; so the exuberant religious imagination of the Greek, which set out with a personification of the sun or the ocean, would generate myths having relation rather to the human

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

symbol than to the real phenomena of its cosmical prototype. Hence it appears to us that any attempt extensively to trace consistent allegory in the myths must fail. Nor need we regret it, since our interest in the subject is of a different nature from that of the ancient philosophical interpreters, who, living at a period when the myths still constituted the popular religion, were under the necessity of bringing them into accordance with their own moral and religious views. It is enough for us if we have sufficient insight into the myths to form an approximate conception of the state of mind which produced them, and to assign them their true rank in the scale of religious development. Mr. Mackay has not escaped the influence of the allegorizing mania; he does not despair of finding the true cosmical meaning of the most natural human incidents in the *Odyssey*, or of the tragic conceptions of the dramatists; but if, like the alchemists, he is sometimes in quest of things not in *rerum natura*, he, like them, elicits much that is suggestive in his search. To criticize details would carry us beyond our limits, and we shall do a greater service to the reader by referring him to the work itself, which, open it where he may, will offer both food and stimulus to his thought.

While the poets of Greece were giving to its religious thought a more and more sensuous expression, its philosophers were working out an opposite result; and Mr. Mackay traces this subtilizing process until it reaches the Aristotelian theosophy, of which he gives a comprehensive and clear account.

It is in his theory concerning the religious develop-

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

ment of the Hebrews, and in his treatment of their records, that Mr. Mackay departs the most widely from prevalent opinion. The idea that many parts of the Old Testament have a mythical character, an idea which was necessary to conciliate them, as well with the philosophical Hebrewism of Philo, as with the Christian morality of Origen, and which has long been familiar to German critics, is still startling to the English theological mind. No thinker of ordinary intelligence can fail to perceive, not merely difference in degree of completeness, but contrast, between the religious conceptions which represented the Deity as sanctioning or prescribing the cunning trickery of Jacob, or the savage cruelties of Joshua, and those which preside over the sublime remonstrances of the prophets; but the explanation is still sought in the theory of accommodation, that is, the puerile and unworthy religious conceptions invariably accompanying an absence of intellectual culture, which in other nations are referred to the general principles of human development, are, in the case of the Hebrews, supposed to have been benevolent falsities on the part of the true God, whereby he allured a barbarous race to his recognition and worship. On this theory, because Abraham had but limited notions of honour and justice, God plagued Pharaoh and Abimelech for being misled by the falsehoods of the father of the faithful, and made those falsehoods redound to the temporal advantage of his chosen servant; because the Israelites were surrounded by examples of idolatrous and sacrificial observance, and had a strong propensity to imitate them, Jehovah,

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

in condescension to their weakness, prescribed for them a ritual analogous in spirit and in symbolism to that of their heathen neighbours: because they were a ferocious race, eager to "eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain," a suitable vent for their destructive energies was found in such requirements as the slaughter of three thousand in their own camp, and the war of extermination against the Canaanites, or in the especial injunction to Joshua to hough the enemy's horses. The only argument by which the theory of accommodation can be sustained is that, in conjunction with that divine countenance of human vice and weakness which it supposes, there were delivered and preserved certain elements of superhuman truth which attest the specifically divine origin of the religion — its distinctive character as a revelation. Now, while the mythical theory does not exclude that more enlarged idea of providential evolution which sees in the peculiar religious and political history of the Hebrews a preparation for ushering into the world a religion which anticipates and fulfils the yearnings of man's spiritual nature, it delivers the understanding from a heavy burthen of contradiction and absurdity, and the religious sentiment from the admission of painful anomalies. The fact that the history of all other nations has a mythical period urges a strong presumption that the Hebrew records will not present an exception in this respect, and an unprejudiced examination confirms this presumption. We find there not only a generic similarity to the gentile myths, in a degrading conception of the divine attributes, with a corresponding crudeness and obliquity

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

of moral views, in an ignorant interpretation of physical phenomena, a love of prodigy, and a lavish supposition of gratuitous miracle, but also a specific resemblance in symbolism. This is visible on a cursory glance, but a nearer investigation discloses overwhelming proof that the Hebrew writings, far from meriting an exceptional confidence, require, from the evidence they exhibit that the Hebrew mind was peculiarly deficient in a true historical sense, special canons of caution in their interpretation. On applying the test of a critical analysis, the books of the Pentateuch resolve themselves into a compilation of distinct documents, differing in date and frequently in spirit and purpose, as may be seen from the variations and contradictions in their accounts of the same event; and the more ancient of these documents presents internal evidence that it was not in existence earlier than the time of Samuel, about four hundred years after Moses. The same artificial coherence, the same arbitrariness of classification and of titles, together with palpable inaccuracies and indications of partisanship, characterize large portions, not only of the remaining historical works, but also of the prophetic. Since these conclusions are denied by no competent critic uncommitted to the maintenance of certain tenets, it would be wise in our theological teachers, instead of struggling to retain a footing for themselves and their doctrine on the crumbling structure of dogmatic interpretation, to cherish those more liberal views of biblical criticism which, admitting of a development of the Christian system corresponding to the wants and the culture of the age, would enable

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

it to strike a firm root in man's moral nature, and to entwine itself with the growth of those new forms of social life to which we are tending. The spirit which doubts the ultimately beneficial tendency of inquiry, which thinks that morality and religion will not bear the broadest daylight our intellect can throw on them, though it may clothe itself in robes of sanctity and use pious phrases, is the worst form of atheism; while he who believes, whatever else he may deny, that the true and the good are synonymous, bears in his soul the essential element of religion. Viewed in this relation, the "Progress of the Intellect" is a valuable addition to recent examples of plain speaking — of that *παρρησία* which Paul held to be the proper effect of confidence in the excellence of revelation, whose manifestation was in the spirit, and not in the letter.

Before stating Mr. Mackay's theory concerning the Hebrew history and religion, we must express our regret that the force of his conclusions is weakened by his unduly insisting on details difficult of proof, by a frequently infelicitous citation, and by his not giving due value to a free poetical impulse in the figurative language of the Hebrews, a deficiency which sometimes leads him into an almost trivial literalness of interpretation. But notwithstanding these occasional defects, the chapters which treat principally of the Hebrews will repay a close study, both from their suggestiveness, and the soundness of their general views. Mr. Mackay holds that the original God of the Israelites was no other than the Nature-God, El or Ilus, worshipped in Arabia, Palestine, and Phœnicia, with licentious and sanguinary

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

rites, under the double aspect of Baal and Moloch; and that the purer worship of Jehovah, inculcated by the prophets and established by Josiah, was a religious reformation among the Hebrews, generated by the growth in civilization consequent on an enlarged commercial intercourse with foreign nations, and contemporaneous with a movement of religious reform which took place throughout Asia, about 700 B. C., "connected in India with the name of Buddha, in Persia (or Media) with that of Zoroaster, and a century later extending itself by Xenophanes and Heraclitus into Greece." According to this theory the calf-worship in the wilderness and under the kings, the altars in the high places, and the atrocities of the valley of Hinnom, were not acts of apostasy, but of persistence in early barbarism. In Mr. Mackay's opinion the account of the Passover, as it now stands, is the veil which the purer conceptions of later Hebrews cast over the ancient custom of sacrificing first-born children to the bloodthirsty El; the massacre of three thousand Israelites, represented in Exodus as retributive, was probably sacrificial — a huge offering to the same demon, the rather that Aaron, the leader in the calf-worship, was not involved in the same destruction; the command by which God is said to have tempted Abraham, the vow of Jephthah, the slaughter of the seven descendants of Saul, whereby David sought to propitiate his God and avert a famine, are indications that human sacrifices were familiar to the Hebrews; above all, that "passing of children through the fire," recorded of so many kings, and indignantly denounced by the prophets, as a practice

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

habitual to the nation, is most probably to be interpreted as an actual immolation. The somewhat obscure passage, Amos v. 25, 26, — "Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images, the star of your God which ye made to yourselves," — Mr. Mackay thinks important as conveying a denial of the early existence of a pure, Jehovistic religion. A disputed passage is, of course, dubious ground for an inference; but there is ample evidence of a less questionable kind, that the early Hebrew God, whether identical or not with any heathen deity, was of a character widely different from the one proclaimed by Micah as requiring nothing of man but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.

The original presiding Deity of Israel was, in Mr. Mackay's words, "emphatically the terrific God." The Old Testament abounds in pictures of divine operations that cannot be regarded as true delineations of the real character of Deity; but only distortions of it, analogous to those exhibited in the mythologies of other countries. The judicious reader of the Hebrew Scriptures, however orthodox his faith, cannot fail to perceive that they exhibit a progress from degrading to enlightened views of divine nature and government. The writings of the prophets are full of protests against the conceptions of popular ignorance, and by continually expanding and purifying the Jewish ideas of Deity, prepared the way for the reception of the teachings of Christ. This view of the progressive character of "revel-

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

ation" does not depend for its evidence on minute points of criticism; it rests rather upon broad facts which are open to the apprehension of the most unlearned; and the "Progress of the Intellect" abounds in statements which place them in the most forcible point of view. To a greater or less extent they are now recognized by Christians of all denominations, and it is impossible to take up the writings, or listen to the discourses, of the leading men of any church or sect without perceiving the influence which they have exerted upon their minds.

Mr. Mackay's analysis and history of the theory of Mediation, from its earliest mythical embodiments, those "flowers which fancy strewed before the youthful steps of Psyche, when she first set out in pursuit of the immortal object of her love," to its subtilization in philosophy; his delineation of the origin of Christianity as an expansion of the prophetic spiritualism, yet carrying within it certain elements of Jewish symbolism, which have arrested its true development and perverted its influence; his final sketch of the confluence of Greek Philosophy and Christianized Hebrewism, are admirable, both from their panoramic breadth and their richness in illustrative details. We can only recommend the reader to resort himself to this treasury of mingled thought and learning, and, as a further inducement, we will quote the concluding passage from the section on the Mediation of Philosophy:—

"The true religious philosophy of an imperfect being is not a system of creed, but, as Socrates thought, an infinite search or approximation. Finality is but another

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

name for bewilderment or defeat, the common affectation of indolence and superstition, a temporary suspension of the mind's health arising from prejudice, and especially from the old error of clinging too closely to notions found instrumental in assisting it after they have ceased to be serviceable, and striving rather to defend and retain them than to make them more correct. A remnant of the mythical lurks in the very sanctuary of science. Forms or theories ever fall short of nature, though they are ever tending to reach a position above nature, and may often be found really to include more than the maker of them at the time knew. To a certain extent they are reliable and complete; as a system of knowledge they are but intermediate and preparatory. As matter is the soul's necessary instrument, so ignorance, more or less mixed up with all its expressions and forms, may be said to be as it were the eyelid through which it gradually opens itself to the truth, admitting no more than it can for the time support, and, as through a veil, learning to support its lustre. The old religionists discovered a universal cause, personified it and prayed to it. The mere notion seemed not only to satisfy the religious feeling, but to solve all problems. Nations unanimously subscribed to the pious formula, which satisfied their imaginations, and pleased their vanity by cheating them into a belief that they were wise; but which, at the same time, supplanted nature by tradition, the sources of truth by artificial disguises, and at last paralyzed the sentiment which gave birth to it. Science, unlike the rude expedient which stupefied without nourishing the

MACKAY'S PROGRESS OF THE INTELLECT

mind, gratifies the religious feeling without arresting it, and opening out the barren mystery of the one into the more explicit and manageable "forms" expressing, not indeed his essence, but his will, feeds an endless enthusiasm by accumulating for ever new objects of pursuit. We have long experienced that knowledge is profitable; we are beginning to find out that it is moral, and shall at last discover it to be religious. Aristotle declared the highest and truest science to be that which is most disinterested; Bacon, treating science as separate from religion, asserted knowledge to be power, and held that truth must be tested by its fruits, that is, its instrumentality in promoting the right and the useful. Both assertions may be justified and reconciled by the fact that, while no real knowledge is powerless or fruitless, the fruits differ in refinement and value, the highest being unquestionably those disinterested gratifications which minister to the highest wants of the highest faculties, and which earned for philosophy the title of a divine love, realizing the mysterious longing of the soul, and promoting the accomplishment of its destiny, —

‘To rise in science as in bliss,
Initiate in the secrets of the skies.’”



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SHORTER PAPERS ‘



THE MORALITY OF WILHELM MEISTER

PERHAPS Mr. Lewes's "Life of Goethe," which we now see advertised, may throw some new light on the structure and purpose of the much-debated novel "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship." In the mean time, we are tempted by the appearance of a new translation to give the opinion which our present knowledge enables us to form on one or two aspects of this many-sided work.

Ask nineteen out of twenty moderately educated persons what they think of "Wilhelm Meister," and the answer will probably be, "I think it an immoral book; and besides, it is awfully dull: I was not able to read it." Whatever truth there may be in the first half of this judgement, the second half is a sufficient guarantee that the book is not likely to do any extensive injury in English society. Parents may let it lie on the drawing-room table without scruple, in the confidence that for youthful minds of the ordinary cast it will have no attractions, and that the exceptional youthful mind which is strongly arrested by it is of too powerful and peculiar a character to be trained according to educational dogmas.

But *is* "Wilhelm Meister" an immoral book? We think not: on the contrary, we think that it appears immoral to some minds because its morality has a grander orbit than any which can be measured by the calculations of the pulpit and of ordinary literature.

THE MORALITY OF WILHELM MEISTER

Goethe, it is sometimes said, seems in this book to be almost destitute of moral bias: he shows no hatred of bad actions, no warm sympathy with good ones; he writes like a passionless Mejnour, to whom all human things are interesting only as objects of intellectual contemplation. But we question whether the direct exhibition of a moral bias in the writer will make a book really moral in its influence. Try this on the first child that asks you to tell it a story. As long as you keep to an apparently impartial narrative of facts you will have earnest eyes fixed on you in rapt attention, but no sooner do you begin to betray symptoms of an intention to moralize, or to turn the current of facts towards a personal application, than the interest of your hearer will slacken, his eyes will wander, and the moral dose will be doubly distasteful from the very sweetmeat in which you have attempted to insinuate it. One grand reason of this is, that the child is aware you are talking *for it* instead of *from yourself*, so that instead of carrying it along in a stream of sympathy with your own interest in the story, you give it the impression of contriving coldly and talking artificially. Now, the moralizing novelist produces the same effect on his mature readers; an effect often heightened by the perception that the moralizing is rather intended to make his book eligible for family reading than prompted by any profound conviction or enthusiasm. Just as far from being really moral is the so-called moral *dénouement*, in which rewards and punishments are distributed according to those notions of justice on which the novel-writer would have recommended that the world should be governed if

THE MORALITY OF WILHELM MEISTER

he had been consulted at the creation. The emotion of satisfaction which a reader feels when the villain of the book dies of some hideous disease, or is crushed by a railway train, is no more essentially moral than the satisfaction which used to be felt in whipping culprits at the cart-tail. So we dismiss the charge of immorality against "Wilhelm Meister" on these two counts — the absence of moral bias in the mode of narration, and the comfortable issues allowed to questionable actions and questionable characters.

But there is another ground for the same accusation, which involves deeper considerations. It is said that some of the scenes and incidents are such as the refined moral taste of these days will not admit to be proper subjects for art, that to depict irregular relations in all the charms they really have for human nature, and to associate lovely qualities with vices which society makes a brand of outlawry, implies a toleration which is at once a sign and a source of perverted moral sentiment. Wilhelm's relation to Mariana, and the charm which the reader is made to feel in the lawless Philina, many incidents that occur during Wilhelm's life with the players, and the stories of Lothario's loves in the present, preterite, and future, are shocking to the prevalent English. It is no answer to this objection to say — what is the fact — that Goethe's pictures are truthful, that the career of almost every young man brings him in contact with far more vitiating irregularities than any presented in the experience of Wilhelm Meister; for no one can maintain that *all* fact is a fit subject for art. The sphere of the artist has its limit somewhere, and the

THE MORALITY OF WILHELM MEISTER

first question is, Has Goethe overstepped this limit, so that the mere fact of artistic representation is a mistake? The second: If his subjects are within the legitimate limits of art, is his mode of treatment such as to make his pictures pernicious? Surely the sphere of art extends wherever there is beauty either in form, or thought, or feeling. A ray of sunlight falling on the dreariest sandbank will often serve the painter for a fine picture; the tragedian may take for his subject the most hideous passions if they serve as the background for some divine deed of tenderness or heroism, and so the novelist may place before us every aspect of human life where there is some trait of love, or endurance, or helplessness to call forth our best sympathies. Balzac, perhaps the most wonderful writer of fiction the world has ever seen, has in many of his novels overstepped this limit. He drags us by his magic force through scene after scene of unmitigated vice, till the effect of walking among this human carrion is a moral nausea. But no one can say that Goethe has sinned in this way.

Everywhere he brings us into the presence of living, generous humanity — mixed and erring, and self-deluding, but saved from utter corruption by the salt of some noble impulse, some disinterested effort, some beam of good nature, even though grotesque or homely. And his mode of treatment seems to us precisely that which is really moral in its influence. It is without exaggeration; he is in no haste to alarm readers into virtue by melodramatic consequences; he quietly follows the stream of fact and of life, and waits patiently for the moral processes of nature as we all do for her material

THE MORALITY OF WILHELM MEISTER

processes. The large tolerance of Goethe, which is markedly exhibited in "Wilhelm Meister," is precisely that to which we point as the element of moral superiority. We all begin life by associating our passions with our moral prepossessions, by mistaking indignation for virtue, and many go through life without awaking from this illusion. These are the "insupportables justes, qui du haut de leurs chaises d'or narguent les misères et les souffrances de l'humanité." But a few are taught by their own falls and their own struggles, by their experience of sympathy and help and goodness in the "publicans and sinners" of these modern days, that the line between the virtuous and vicious, so far from being a necessary safeguard to morality, is itself an immoral fiction. Those who have been already taught this lesson will at once recognize the true morality of Goethe's works. Like "Wilhelm Meister," they will be able to love the good in a Philina, and to reverence the far-seeing efforts of a Lothario.

THOMAS CARLYLE

It has been well said that the highest aim in education is analogous to the highest aim in mathematics, namely, to obtain not *results* but *powers*, not particular solutions, but the means by which endless solutions may be wrought. He is the most effective educator who aims less at perfecting specific acquirements than at producing that mental condition which renders acquirements easy, and leads to their useful application; who does not seek to make his pupils moral by enjoining particular courses of action, but by bringing into activity the feelings and sympathies that must issue in noble action. On the same ground it may be said that the most effective writer is not he who announces a particular discovery, who convinces men of a particular conclusion, who demonstrates that this measure is right and that measure wrong; but he who rouses in others the activities that must issue in discovery, who awakes men from their indifference to the right and the wrong, who nerves their energies to seek for the truth and live up to it at whatever cost. The influence of such a writer is dynamic. He does not teach men how to use sword and musket, but he inspires their souls with courage and sends a strong will into their muscles. He does not, perhaps, enrich your stock of data, but he clears away the film from your eyes that you may search for data to some purpose. He does not, per-

THOMAS CARLYLE

haps, convince you, but he strikes you, undeceives you, animates you. You are not directly fed by his books, but you are braced as by a walk up to an alpine summit, and yet subdued to calm and reverence as by the sublime things to be seen from that summit.

Such a writer is Thomas Carlyle. It is an idle question to ask whether his books will be read a century hence: if they were all burnt as the grandest of Suttees on his funeral-pile, it would be only like cutting down an oak after its acorns have sown a forest. For there is hardly a superior or active mind of this generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings; there has hardly been an English book written for the last ten or twelve years that would not have been different if Carlyle had not lived. The character of his influence is best seen in the fact that many of the men who have the least agreement with his opinions are those to whom the reading of "Sartor Resartus" was an epoch in the history of their minds. The extent of his influence may be best seen in the fact that ideas which were startling novelties when he first wrote them are now become common-places. And we think few men will be found to say that this influence on the whole has not been for good. There are plenty who question the justice of Carlyle's estimates of past men and past times, plenty who quarrel with the exaggerations of the "Latter-Day Pamphlets," and who are as far as possible from looking for an amendment of things from a Carlylean theocracy with the "greatest man" as a Joshua who is to smite the wicked (and the stupid) till the going down of the sun. But for any large nature those points of difference are

THOMAS CARLYLE

quite incidental. It is not as a theorist, but as a great and beautiful human nature, that Carlyle influences us. You may meet a man whose wisdom seems unimpeachable, since you find him entirely in agreement with yourself; but this oracular man of unexceptionable opinions has a green eye, a wiry hand, and altogether a *Wesen*, or demeanour, that makes the world look blank to you, and whose unexceptionable opinions become a bore; while another man, who deals in what you cannot but think "dangerous paradoxes," warms your heart by the pressure of his hand, and looks out on the world with so clear and loving an eye that nature seems to reflect the light of his glance upon your own feeling. So it is with Carlyle. When he is saying the very opposite of what we think, he says it so finely, with such hearty conviction, he makes the object about which we differ stand out in such grand relief under the clear light of his strong and honest intellect, he appeals so constantly to our sense of the manly and the truthful, that we are obliged to say "Hear! hear!" to the writer before we can give the decorous "Oh! oh!" to his opinions.

Much twaddling criticism has been spent on Carlyle's style. Unquestionably there are some genuine minds, not at all given to twaddle, to whom his style is antipathetic, who find it as unendurable as an English lady finds peppermint. Against antipathies there is no arguing; they are misfortunes. But instinctive repulsion apart, surely there is no one who can read and relish Carlyle without feeling that they could no more wish him to have written in another style than they

THOMAS CARLYLE

could wish Gothic architecture not to be Gothic, or Raffaele not to be Raffaellesque. It is the fashion to speak of Carlyle almost exclusively as a philosopher; but, to our thinking, he is yet more of an artist than a philosopher. He glances deep down into human nature, and shows the causes of human actions; he seizes grand generalizations, and traces them in the particular with wonderful acumen; and in all this he is a philosopher. But, perhaps, his greatest power lies in concrete presentation. No novelist has made his creations live for us more thoroughly than Carlyle has made Mirabeau and the men of the French Revolution, Cromwell and the Puritans. What humour in his pictures! Yet what depth of appreciation, what reverence for the great and god-like under every sort of earthly mummery!

CARLYLE'S LIFE OF STERLING

As soon as the closing of the Great Exhibition afforded a reasonable hope that there would once more be a reading public, "The Life of Sterling" appeared. A new work by Carlyle must always be among the literary births eagerly chronicled by the journals and greeted by the public. In a book of such parentage we care less about the subject than about its treatment, just as we think the "Portrait of a Lord" worth studying if it come from the pencil of a Van Dyck. The life of John Sterling, however, has intrinsic interest, even if it be viewed simply as the struggle of a restless aspiring soul, yearning to leave a distinct impress of itself on the spiritual development of humanity, with that fell disease which, with a refinement of torture, heightens the susceptibility and activity of the faculties, while it undermines their creative force. Sterling, moreover, was a man thoroughly in earnest, to whom poetry and philosophy were not merely another form of paper currency or a ladder to fame, but an end in themselves, — one of those finer spirits with whom, amidst the jar and hubbub of our daily life,

"The melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime."

But his intellect was active and rapid, rather than powerful, and in all his writings we feel the want of a stronger electric current to give that vigour of conception

CARLYLE'S LIFE OF STERLING

and felicity of expression by which we distinguish the undefinable something called genius; while his moral nature, though refined and elevated, seems to have been subordinate to his intellectual tendencies and social qualities, and to have had itself little determining influence on his life. His career was less exceptional than his character: a youth marked by delicate health and studious tastes, a short-lived and not very successful share in the management of the *Athenæum*, a fever of sympathy with Spanish patriots, arrested before it reached a dangerous crisis by an early love-affair ending in marriage, a fifteen months' residence in the West Indies, eight months of curate's duty at Herstmonceux, relinquished on the ground of failing health, and through his remaining years a succession of migrations to the South in search of a friendly climate, with the occasional publication of an "article," a tale, or a poem in *Blackwood's* or elsewhere, — this, on the prosaic background of an easy competence, was what made up the outer tissue of Sterling's existence. The impression of his intellectual power on his personal friends seems to have been produced chiefly by the eloquence and brilliancy of his conversation; but the mere reader of his works and letters would augur from them neither the wit, nor the *curiosa felicitas* of epithet and imagery, which would rank him with the men whose sayings are thought worthy of perpetuation in books of table-talk and "ana." The public, then, since it is content to do without biographies of much more remarkable men, cannot be supposed to have felt any pressing demand even for a single life of Sterling; still less, it might be thought, when so

CARLYLE'S LIFE OF STERLING

distinguished a writer as Archdeacon Hare had furnished this, could there be any need for another. But, in opposition to the majority of Mr. Carlyle's critics, we agree with him that the first life is properly the justification of the second. Even among the readers personally unacquainted with Sterling, those who sympathized with his ultimate alienation from the Church rather than with his transient conformity, were likely to be dissatisfied with the entirely apologetic tone of Hare's "Life," which, indeed, is confessedly an incomplete presentation of Sterling's mental course after his opinions diverged from those of his clerical biographer; while those attached friends (and Sterling possessed the happy magic that secures many such) who knew him best during this latter part of his career, would naturally be pained to have it represented, though only by implication, as a sort of deepening declension ending in a virtual retraction. Of such friends Carlyle was the most eminent, and perhaps the most highly valued; and, as co-trustee with Archdeacon Hare of Sterling's literary character and writings, he felt a kind of responsibility that no mistaken idea of his departed friend should remain before the world without correction. Evidently, however, his "Life of Sterling" was not so much the conscientious discharge of a trust as a labour of love, and to this is owing its strong charm. Carlyle here shows us his "sunny side." We no longer see him breathing out threatenings and slaughter, as in the "Latter-Day Pamphlets," but moving among the charities and amenities of life, loving and beloved, — a Teufelsdröckh still, but humanized by a Blumine worthy

CARLYLE'S LIFE OF STERLING

of him. We have often wished that genius would incline itself more frequently to the task of the biographer, — that when some great or good personage dies, instead of the dreary three or five volumed compilations of letter and diary and detail, little to the purpose, which two thirds of the reading public have not the chance, nor the other third the inclination, to read, we could have a real “Life,” setting forth briefly and vividly the man’s inward and outward struggles, aims, and achievements, so as to make clear the meaning which his experience has for his fellows. A few such lives (chiefly, indeed, autobiographies) the world possesses, and they have, perhaps, been more influential on the formation of character than any other kind of reading. But the conditions required for the perfection of life writing — personal intimacy, a loving and poetic nature which sees the beauty and the depth of familiar things, and the artistic power which seizes characteristic points and renders them with lifelike effect — are seldom found in combination. “The Life of Sterling” is an instance of this rare conjunction. Its comparatively tame scenes and incidents gather picturesqueness and interest under the rich lights of Carlyle’s mind. We are told neither too little nor too much; the facts noted, the letters selected, are all such as serve to give the liveliest conception of what Sterling was and what he did; and though the book speaks much of other persons, this collateral matter is all a kind of scene-painting, and is accessory to the main purpose. The portrait of Coleridge, for example, is precisely adapted to bring before us the intellectual region in which Sterling lived for

CARLYLE'S LIFE OF STERLING

some time before entering the Church. Almost every review has extracted this admirable description, in which genial veneration and compassion struggle with irresistible satire; but the emphasis of quotation cannot be too often given to the following pregnant paragraph:—

“The truth is, I now see Coleridge’s talk and speculation was the emblem of himself. In it, as in him, a ray of heavenly inspiration struggled, in a tragically ineffectual degree, with the weakness of flesh and blood. He says once, he ‘had skirted the howling deserts of infidelity.’ This was evident enough; but he had not had the courage, in defiance of pain and terror, to press resolutely across said deserts to the new, firm lands of faith beyond; he preferred to create logical fatamorganas for himself on this hither side, and laboriously solace himself with these.”

The above-mentioned step of Sterling — his entering the Church — is the point on which Carlyle is most decidedly at issue with Archdeacon Hare. The latter holds that had Sterling’s health permitted him to remain in the Church, he would have escaped those aberrations from orthodoxy which, in the clerical view, are to be regarded as the failure and shipwreck of his career, apparently thinking, like that friend of Arnold’s who recommended a curacy as the best means of clearing up Trinitarian difficulties, that “orders” are a sort of spiritual backboard, which, by dint of obliging a man to look as if he were strait, end by making him so. According to Carlyle, on the contrary, the real “aberration” of Sterling was his choice of the clerical pro-

CARLYLE'S LIFE OF STERLING

fession, which was simply a mistake as to his true vocation:—

"Sterling," he says, "was not intrinsically, nor had ever been in the highest or chief degree, a devotional mind. Of course all excellence in man, and worship as the supreme excellence, was part of the inheritance of this gifted man; but if called to define him, I should say artist, not saint, was the real bent of his being."

Again:—

"No man of Sterling's veracity, had he clearly consulted his own heart, or had his own heart been capable of clearly responding, and not been bewildered by transient fantasies and theosophic moonshine, could have undertaken this function. His heart would have answered, 'No, thou canst not. What is incredible to thee, thou shalt not, at thy soul's peril, attempt to believe! Else-whither for a refuge, or die here. Go to perdition if thou must, but not with a lie in thy mouth; by the eternal Maker, no!'"

From the period when Carlyle's own acquaintance with Sterling commenced, the "Life" has a double interest, from the glimpses it gives us of the writer as well as of his hero. We are made present at their first introduction to each other; we get a lively idea of their colloquies and walks together, and in this easy way, without any heavy disquisition or narrative, we obtain a clear insight into Sterling's character and mental progress. Above all, we are gladdened with a perception of the affinity that exists between noble souls, in spite of diversity in ideas,—in what Carlyle calls "the logical outcome" of the faculties. This "Life of Sterling" is a

CARLYLE'S LIFE OF STERLING

touching monument of the capability human nature possesses of the highest love, the love of the good and beautiful in character, which is, after all, the essence of piety. The style of the work, too, is for the most part at once pure and rich; there are passages of deep pathos which come upon the reader like a strain of solemn music, and others which show that aptness of epithet, that masterly power of close delineation, in which, perhaps, no writer has excelled Carlyle.

We have said that we think this second "Life of Sterling" justified by the first; but were it not so, the book would justify itself.

MARGARET FULLER

OUR prediction as to the rich harvest of American biography that is now ripening finds a beautiful fulfilment in the "Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli." Reading this book after Carlyle's "Life of Sterling," we are reminded, by their similarity of subject and authorship, as well as by their simultaneous preparation, that it is "the same spirit which worketh all in all." There is a noticeable resemblance between these two gifted beings: their studies, aspirations, endeavours, and influence were of a similar nature; they had the same unsettled career and the same premature end. But Margaret Fuller had a deeper, stronger, richer life, and wielded a mightier power over her companions and contemporaries. If her aim was not higher, it was clearer; and what she aimed at she accomplished. It is not, however, in contrast with Sterling, but in the midst of her friends, that we must view her. Considering the remarkable influence she exercised over the circle which ultimately acknowledged her as its ruling spirit, we are at a loss whether to regard her as the parent or child of New England transcendentalism. Perhaps neither the one nor the other. It seems to have been a movement on the part of different minds, as spontaneous and independent in each as it was simultaneous in all,—a movement flowing from the undying vernal impulse of nature. It was essentially an intellectual, moral, and

MARGARET FULLER

spiritual regeneration; a renewing of the whole man; a kindling of his aspirations after full development of faculty and perfect symmetry of being. Then followed the fruits of this spirit, — faith, hope, and love; self-sacrifice, mutual sympathy, fellowship, and earnest endeavour. "Thus, by mere attraction of affinity," says Mr. Channing, "grew together the brotherhood of the 'like-minded,' as they were pleasantly nicknamed by outsiders and by themselves, on the ground that no two were of the same opinion." Of this sect Margaret Fuller was the priestess. In conversation she was as copious and oracular as Coleridge, brilliant as Sterling, pungent and paradoxical as Carlyle; gifted with the inspired powers of a pythoness, she saw into the hearts and over the heads of all who came near her; and, but for a sympathy as boundless as her self-esteem, she would have despised the whole human race! Her frailty, in this respect, was no secret either to herself or her friends. She quizzed them and boasted of herself to such an excess as to turn disgust into laughter, — yea, so right royally did she carry herself that her arrogance became a virtue, worshipful as the majesty of the gods! Yet along with all this there was much self-scrutiny; and underneath it all much womanly tenderness, which ripened and mellowed till, after all, few women were more womanly than Margaret Fuller. "Very early," she says, "she perceived that the great object of life was to grow"; and with rare courage she put no check even upon the growth of her infirmities, convinced, no doubt, that it required only a corresponding growth of some other qualities to constitute them her glory and

MARGARET FULLER

her crown. That supplementary growth subsequent events tended to foster. The two sides of her more mature character — the tender and the strong — were harmonized and tested by the peculiar position into which she was thrown during her sojourn at Rome, at the time of the Revolution. We have not space to explain our allusions to those who have not read, or do not intend to read, these “Memoirs” for themselves; but in indicating our general opinion of her character, we must say that from the time she became a mother till the final tragedy when she perished with her husband and child within sight of her native shore, she was an altered woman, and evinced a greatness of soul and heroism of character so grand and subduing that we feel disposed to extend to her whole career the admiration and sympathy inspired by the closing scenes. While her reputation was at its height in the literary circles of Boston and New York, she was so self-conscious that her life seemed to be a studied *act*, rather than a spontaneous growth; but this was the mere flutter on the surface. The well was deep, and the spring genuine; and it is creditable to her friends, as well as to herself, that such at all times was their belief.

We have already spoken of her in connection with Sterling. Both have found kindred spirits to write their biographies; but Emerson and his colleagues must yield to Carlyle in mastery of the pencil. The “Life of Sterling,” though made up of fragments and reminiscences, is a finished portrait. But the “Memoirs of Margaret Fuller” is a book of reminiscences merely. No attempt is made at symmetry of form or colour;

MARGARET FULLER

nor are even the outward events of her life presented in their consecutive order. Something like an appropriation of periods and localities seems to have been prearranged, but not attended to; and according to the caprice of the writer's memory you are carried hither and thither, backwards and forwards, over the scenes of her history. A little more attention to chronology and geography would have mended the matter considerably, and made the mechanism of the narrative as good as the material. "Memoirs," then, — memoranda, — not a life, yet full of life and full of thought, — these volumes will be read and prized by all truth-loving sympathetic souls.

MARGARET FULLER AND MARY
WOLLSTONECRAFT

THE dearth of new books just now gives us time to recur to less recent ones which we have hitherto noticed but slightly; and among these we choose the late edition of Margaret Fuller's "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," because we think it has been unduly thrust into the background by less comprehensive and candid productions on the same subject. Notwithstanding certain defects of taste and a sort of vague spiritualism and grandiloquence which belong to all but the very best American writers, the book is a valuable one: it has the enthusiasm of a noble and sympathetic nature, with the moderation and breadth and large allowance of a vigorous and cultivated understanding. There is no exaggeration of woman's moral excellence or intellectual capabilities; no injudicious insistence on her fitness for this or that function hitherto engrossed by men; but a calm plea for the removal of unjust laws and artificial restrictions, so that the possibilities of her nature may have room for full development, a wisely stated demand to disencumber her of the —

Parasitic forms

That seem to keep her up, but drag her down —
And leave her field to burgeon and to bloom
From all within her, make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.

MARGARET FULLER AND

It is interesting to compare this essay of Margaret Fuller's, published in its earliest form in 1843, with a work on the position of woman written between sixty and seventy years ago — we mean Mary Wollstonecraft's "Rights of Woman." The latter work was not continued beyond the first volume; but so far as this carries the subject, the comparison, at least in relation to strong sense and loftiness of moral tone, is not at all disadvantageous to the woman of the last century. There is in some quarters a vague prejudice against the "Rights of Woman" as in some way or other a reprehensible book, but readers who go to it with this impression will be surprised to find it eminently serious, severely moral, and withal rather heavy — the true reason, perhaps, that no edition has been published since 1796, and that it is now rather scarce. There are several points of resemblance, as well as of striking difference, between the two books. A strong understanding is present in both; but Margaret Fuller's mind was like some regions of her own American continent, where you are constantly stepping from the sunny "clearings" into the mysterious twilight of the tangled forest — she often passes in one breath from forcible reasoning to dreamy vagueness; moreover, her unusually varied culture gives her great command of illustration. Mary Wollstonecraft, on the other hand, is nothing if not rational; she has no erudition, and her grave pages are lit up by no ray of fancy. In both writers we discern, under the brave bearing of a strong and truthful nature, the beating of a loving woman's heart, which teaches them not to undervalue the smallest

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

offices of domestic care or kindliness. But Margaret Fuller, with all her passionate sensibility, is more of the literary woman, who would not have been satisfied without intellectual production; Mary Wollstonecraft, we imagine, wrote not at all for writing's sake, but from the pressure of other motives. So far as the difference of the date allows, there is a striking coincidence in their trains of thought; indeed, every important idea in the "Rights of Woman," except the combination of home education with a common day-school for boys and girls, reappears in Margaret Fuller's essay.

One point on which they both write forcibly is the fact that, while men have a horror of such faculty or culture in the other sex as tends to place it on a level with their own, they are really in a state of subjection to ignorant and feeble-minded women. Margaret Fuller says:—

"Wherever man is sufficiently raised above extreme poverty or brutal stupidity, to care for the comforts of a fireside, or the bloom and ornament of life, woman has always power enough, if she choose to exert it, and is usually disposed to do so, in proportion to her ignorance and childish vanity. Unacquainted with the importance of life and its purposes, trained to a selfish coquetry and love of petty power, she does not look beyond the pleasure of making herself felt at the moment, and governments are shaken and commerce broken up to gratify the pique of a female favourite. The English shopkeeper's wife does not vote, but it is for her interest that the politician canvasses by the coarsest flattery."

MARGARET FULLER AND

Again:—

“All wives, bad or good, loved or unloved, inevitably influence their husbands from the power their position not merely gives, but necessitates, of colouring evidence and infusing feelings in hours when the — patient, shall I call him? — is off his guard.”

Hear now what Mary Wollstonecraft says on the same subject:—

“Women have been allowed to remain in ignorance and slavish dependence many, very many years, and still we hear of nothing but their fondness of pleasure and sway, their preference of rakes and soldiers, their childish attachment to toys, and the vanity that makes them value accomplishments more than virtues. History brings forward a fearful catalogue of the crimes which their cunning has produced, when the weak slaves have had sufficient address to overreach their masters. . . . When, therefore, I call women slaves, I mean in a political and civil sense; for indirectly they obtain too much power, and are debased by their exertions to obtain illicit sway. . . . The libertinism, and even the virtues of superior men, will always give women of some description great power over them; and these weak women, under the influence of childish passions and selfish vanity, *will throw a false light over the objects which the very men view with their eyes who ought to enlighten their judgement.* Men of fancy, and those sanguine characters who mostly hold the helm of human affairs in general, relax in the society of women; and surely I need not cite to the most superficial reader of history the numerous examples of vice and oppression

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

which the private intrigues of female favourites have produced; not to dwell on the mischief that naturally arises from the blundering interposition of well-meaning folly. *For in the transactions of business it is much better to have to deal with a knave than a fool, because a knave adheres to some plan, and any plan of reason may be seen through sooner than a sudden flight of folly.* The power which vile and foolish women have had over wise men who possessed sensibility is notorious."

There is a notion commonly entertained among men that an instructed woman, capable of having opinions, is likely to prove an impracticable yoke-fellow, always pulling one way when her husband wants to go the other, oracular in tone, and prone to give curtain lectures on metaphysics. But surely, so far as obstinacy is concerned, your unreasoning animal is the most unmanageable of creatures, where you are not allowed to settle the question by a cudgel, a whip and bridle, or even a string to the leg. For our own parts, we see no consistent or commodious medium between the old plan of corporal discipline and that thorough education of women which will make them rational beings in the highest sense of the word. Wherever weakness is not harshly controlled it must *govern*, as you may see when a strong man holds a little child by the hand, how he is pulled hither and thither, and wearied in his walk by his submission to the whims and feeble movements of his companion. A really cultured woman, like a really cultured man, will be ready to yield in trifles. So far as we see, there is no indissoluble connection between infirmity of logic and infirmity of will, and a woman quite innocent of an

MARGARET FULLER AND

opinion in philosophy, is as likely as not to have an indomitable opinion about the kitchen. As to airs of superiority, no woman ever had them in consequence of true culture, but only because her culture was shallow or unreal, only as a result of what Mrs. Malaprop well calls "the ineffectual qualities in a woman" — mere acquisitions carried about, and not knowledge thoroughly assimilated so as to enter into the growth of the character.

To return to Margaret Fuller, some of the best things she says are on the folly of absolute definitions of woman's nature and absolute demarcations of woman's mission. "Nature," she says, "seems to delight in varying the arrangements, as if to show that she will be fettered by no rule; and we must admit the same varieties that she admits." Again: "If nature is never bound down, nor the voice of inspiration stifled, that is enough. We are pleased that women should write and speak, if they feel need of it, from having something to tell; but silence for ages would be no misfortune, if that silence be from divine command, and not from man's tradition." And here is a passage, the beginning of which has been often quoted: —

"If you ask me what offices they (women) may fill, I reply — any. I do not care what case you put; let them be sea-captains if you will. I do not doubt there are women well fitted for such an office, and, if so, I should be as glad as to welcome the Maid of Saragossa or the Maid of Missolonghi, or the Suliote heroine, or Emily Plater. I think women need, especially at this juncture, a much greater range of occupation than they

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

have, to rouse their latent powers. . . . In families that I know, some little girls like to saw wood, others to use carpenter's tools. Where these tastes are indulged, cheerfulness and good-humour are promoted. Where they are forbidden, because 'such things are not proper for girls,' they grow sullen and mischievous. Fourier had observed these wants of women, as no one can fail to do who watches the desires of little girls, or knows the ennui that haunts grown women, except where they make to themselves a serene little world by art of some kind. He, therefore, in proposing a great variety of employments, in manufactures or the care of plants and animals, allows for one-third of women as likely to have a taste for masculine pursuits, one-third of men for feminine. . . . I have no doubt, however, that a large proportion of women would give themselves to the same employments as now, because there are circumstances that must lead them. Mothers will delight to make the nest soft and warm. Nature would take care of that; no need to clip the wings of any bird that wants to soar and sing, or finds in itself the strength of pinion for a migratory flight unusual to its kind. The difference would be that *all* need not be constrained to employments for which *some* are unfit."

Apropos of the same subject, we find Mary Wollstonecraft offering a suggestion which the women of the United States have already begun to carry out. She says:—

"Women, in particular, all want to be ladies. Which is simply to have nothing to do, but listlessly to go they scarcely care where, for they cannot tell what. But what

MARGARET FULLER AND

have women to do in society, I may be asked, but to loiter with easy grace? surely you would not condemn them all to suckle fools and chronicle small beer. No. *Women might certainly study the art of healing, and be physicians as well as nurses.* . . . Business of various kinds they might likewise pursue, if they were educated in a more orderly manner. . . . Women would not then marry for a support, as men accept of places under government, and neglect the implied duties."

Men pay a heavy price for their reluctance to encourage self-help and independent resources in women. The precious meridian years of many a man of genius have to be spent in the toil of routine, that an "establishment" may be kept up for a woman who can understand none of his secret yearnings, who is fit for nothing but to sit in her drawing-room like a doll-Madonna in her shrine. No matter. Anything is more endurable than to change our established formulæ about women, or to run the risk of looking up to our wives instead of looking down on them. *Sit divus, dummodo non sit vivus* (let him be a god, provided he be not living), said the Roman magnates of Romulus; and so men say of women, let them be idols, useless absorbents of precious things, provided we are not obliged to admit them to be strictly fellow-beings, to be treated, one and all, with justice and sober reverence.

On one side we hear that woman's position can never be improved until women themselves are better; and on the other, that women can never become better until their position is improved — until the laws are made more just, and a wider field opened to feminine activity.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

But we constantly hear the same difficulty stated about the human race in general. There is a perpetual action and reaction between individuals and institutions; we must try and mend both by little and little — the only way in which human things can be mended. Unfortunately, many over-zealous champions of women assert their actual equality with men — nay, even their moral superiority to men — as a ground for their release from oppressive laws and restrictions. They lose strength immensely by this false position. If it were true, then there would be a case in which slavery and ignorance nourished virtue, and so far we should have an argument for the continuance of bondage. But we want freedom and culture for woman, because subjection and ignorance have debased her, and with her, Man; for —

If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow?

Both Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft have too much sagacity to fall into this sentimental exaggeration. Their ardent hopes of what women may become do not prevent them from seeing and painting women as they are. On the relative moral excellence of men and women Mary Wollstonecraft speaks with the most decision: —

“Women are supposed to possess more sensibility, and even humanity, than men, and their strong attachments and instantaneous emotions of compassion are given as proofs; but the clinging affection of ignorance has seldom anything noble in it, and may mostly be resolved into selfishness, as well as the affection of children and brutes. I have known many weak women

MARGARET FULLER

whose sensibility was entirely engrossed by their husbands; and as for their humanity, it was very faint indeed, or rather it was only a transient emotion of compassion. Humanity does not consist 'in a squeamish ear,' says an eminent orator. 'It belongs to the mind as well as to the nerves.' But this kind of exclusive affection, though it degrades the individual, should not be brought forward as a proof of the inferiority of the sex, because it is the natural consequence of confined views; for even women of superior sense, having their attention turned to little employments and private plans, rarely rise to heroism, unless when spurred on by love! and love, as an heroic passion, like genius, appears but once in an age. I therefore agree with the moralist who asserts 'that women have seldom so much generosity as men'; and that their narrow affections, to which justice and humanity are often sacrificed, render the sex apparently inferior, especially as they are commonly inspired by men; but I contend that the heart would expand as the understanding gained strength, if women were not depressed from their cradles."

We had marked several other passages of Margaret Fuller's for extract, but as we do not aim at an exhaustive treatment of our subject, and are only touching a few of its points, we have, perhaps, already claimed as much of the reader's attention as he will be willing to give to such desultory material.

THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT¹

NO art of religious symbolism has a deeper root in nature than that of turning with reverence towards the East. For almost all our good things — our most precious vegetables, our noblest animals, our loveliest flowers, our arts, our religious and philosophical ideas, our very nursery tales and romances have travelled to us from the East. In an historical as well as in a physical sense, the East is the Land of the Morning. Perhaps the simple reason of this may be that when the earth first began to move on her axis her Asiatic side was towards the sun — the eastern cheek first blushed under his rays. And so this priority of sunshine, like the first move in chess, gave the East the precedence though not the pre-eminence in all things; just as the garden slope that fronts the morning sun yields the earliest seedlings, though those seedlings may attain a hardier and more luxuriant growth by being transplanted. But we leave this question to wiser heads —

“Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.”

(Excuse the novelty of the quotation.) We have not carried our reader's thoughts to the East that we may discuss the reason why we owe it so many good things, but that we may introduce him to a new pleasure, due, at least indirectly, to that elder region of the earth. We

¹ *The Shaving of Shagpat; an Arabian Entertainment.* By George Meredith.

THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT

mean "The Shaving of Shagpat," which is indeed an original fiction just produced in this Western island, but which is so intensely oriental in its conception and execution, that the author has done wisely to guard against the supposition of its being a translation, by prefixing the statement that it is derived from no Eastern source, but is altogether his own.

"The Shaving of Shagpat," is a work of genius, and of poetical genius. It has none of the tameness which belongs to mere imitations manufactured with servile effort or thrown off with simious facility. It is no patchwork of borrowed incidents. Mr. Meredith has not simply imitated Arabian fictions, he has been inspired by them; he has used oriental forms, but only as an oriental genius would have used them who had been "to the manner born." Goethe, when he wrote an immortal work under the inspiration of oriental studies, very properly called it *West-östliche* — West-eastern — because it was thoroughly Western in spirit, though Eastern in its forms. But this double epithet would not give a true idea of Mr. Meredith's work, for we do not remember that throughout our reading we were once struck by an incongruity between the thought and the form, once startled by the intrusion of the chill north into the land of the desert and the palm. Perhaps more lynx-eyed critics, and more learned orientalists, than we, may detect discrepancies to which we are blind, but our experience will at least indicate what is likely to be the average impression. In one particular, indeed, Mr. Meredith differs widely from his models, but that difference is a high merit: it lies in the exquisite delicacy

THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT

of his love-incidents and love-scenes. In every other characteristic — in exuberance of imagery, in picturesque wildness of incident, in significant humour, in aphoristic wisdom, the “Shaving of Shagpat” is a new Arabian Night. To two thirds of the reading world this is sufficient recommendation.

According to oriental custom the main story of the book — The Shaving of Shagpat — forms the setting to several minor tales, which are told, on pretexts more or less plausible, by the various *dramatis personae*. We will not forestall the reader's pleasure by telling him who Shagpat was, or what were the wondrous adventures through which Shibli Bagarag, the wandering barber, became Master of the Event and the destroyer of illusions, by shaving from Shagpat the mysterious identical which had held men in subjection to him. There is plenty of deep meaning in the tale for those who cannot be satisfied without deep meanings, but there is no didactic thrusting forward of moral lessons, and our imagination is never chilled by a sense of allegorical intention predominating over poetic creation. Nothing can be more vivid and concrete than the narrative and description, nothing fresher and more vigorous than the imagery. Are we reading how horsemen pursued their journey? We are told that they “flourished their lances with cries, and jerked their heels into the flanks of their steeds, and stretched forward till their beards were mixed with the tossing manes, and the dust rose after them crimson in the sun.” Is it a maiden's eyes we are to see? They are “dark, under a low arch of darker lashes, like stars on the skirts of storm.” Some-

THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT

times the images are exquisitely poetical, as when Bhanavar looks forth "on the stars that were above the purple heights and the *blushes of inner heaven that streamed up the sky*"; sometimes ingenious and pithy: for example, "she clenched her hands an instant with that feeling which knocketh a nail in the coffin of a desire not dead." Indeed, one of the rarest charms of the book is the constant alternation of passion and wild imaginativeness with humour and pithy, practical sense. Mr. Meredith is very happy in his imitation of the lyrical fragments which the Eastern tale-tellers weave into their narrative, either for the sake of giving emphasis to their sententiousness, or for the sake of giving a more intense utterance to passion, a loftier tone to description. We will quote a specimen of the latter kind from the story of "Bhanavar the Beautiful." This story is the brightest gem among the minor tales, and perhaps in the whole book. It is admirably constructed and thoroughly poetic both in outline and in texture.

"Bhanavar gazed on her beloved, and the bridal dew overflowed her underlids, and she loosed her hair to let it flow, part over her shoulders, part over his, and in sighs that were the measure of music she sang:

'I thought not to love again!
But now I love as I loved not before:
I love not: I adore!
O my beloved, kiss, kiss me! waste thy kisses like a rain.
Are not thy red lips fain?
Oh, and so softly they greet!
Am I not sweet?
Sweet must I be for thee, or sweet in vain:
Sweet to thee only, my dear love!

THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT

The lamps and censers sink, but cannot cheat

These eyes of thine that shoot above

Trembling lustres of the dove!

A darkness drowns all lustres: still I see

Thee, my love, thee!

Thee, my glory of gold, from head to feet!

Oh, how the lids of the world close quite when our lips meet!

“Almeryl strained her to him, and responded:

‘My life was midnight on the mountain side;

Cold stars were on the heights:

There, in my darkness, I had lived and died,

Content with little lights.

Sudden I saw the heavens flush with a beam,

And I ascended soon,

And evermore over mankind supreme

Stood silver in the moon.’

“And he fell playfully into a new metre, singing:

‘Who will paint my beloved

In musical word or colour?

Earth with an envy is moved:

Sea-shells and roses she brings,

Gems from the green ocean-springs,

Fruits with the fairy bloom-dews,

Feathers of Paradise hues,

Waters with jewel-bright falls,

Ore from the Genii-halls:

All in their splendour approved;

All; but, match’d with my beloved,

Darker, denser, and duller.’

“Then she kissed him for that song, and sang:

‘Once to be beautiful was my pride,

And I blush’d in love with my own bright brow:

Once, when a wooer was by my side,

I worshipp’d the object that had his vow:

Different, different, different now,

Different now is my beauty to me:

Different, different, different now!

For I prize it alone because prized by thee.’

THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT

“Almeryl stretched his arm to the lattice, and drew it open, letting in the soft night wind, and the sound of the fountain and the bulbul and the beam of the stars, and versed to her in the languor of deep love :

‘Whether we die or we live
Matters it now no more:
Life has nought further to give:
Love is its crown and its core.
Come to us either, we’re rife, —
Death or life!

‘Death can take not away,
Darkness and light are the same:
We are beyond the pale ray,
Wrapt in a rosier flame:
Welcome which will to our breath, —
Life or death!’”

We hope we have said, if not enough to do justice to “The Shaving of Shagpat,” enough to make our readers desire to see it. They will find it, compared with the other fictions which the season has provided, to use its own oriental style, “as the apple tree among the trees of the wood.”

THE GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT

THE inventor of movable types," says the venerable Teufelsdröckh, "was disbanding hired armies, cashiering most kings and senates, and creating a whole new democratic world." Has any one yet said what great things are being done by the men who are trying to banish ugliness from our streets and our homes, and to make both the outside and the inside of our dwellings worthy of a world where there are forests, and flower-tressed meadows, and the plumage of birds; where the insects carry lessons of colour on their wings, and even the surface of a stagnant pool will show us the wonders of iridescence and the most delicate forms of leafage? They, too, are modifying opinions, for they are modifying men's moods and habits, which are the mothers of opinions, having quite as much to do with their formation as the responsible father, Reason. Think of certain manufacturing towns where the piety is chiefly a belief in copious perdition, and the pleasure is chiefly gin. The dingy surface of wall pierced by the ugliest windows, the staring shop-fronts, paper-hangings, carpets, brass and gilt mouldings, and advertising placards, have an effect akin to that of malaria; it is easy to understand that with such surroundings there is more belief in cruelty than in beneficence, and that the best earthly bliss attainable is the dulling of the external

THE GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT

senses. For it is a fatal mistake to suppose that ugliness which is taken for beauty will answer all the purposes of beauty; the subtle relation between all kinds of truth and fitness in our life forbids that bad taste should ever be harmless to our moral sensibility or our intellectual discernment; and, more than that, as it is probable that fine musical harmonies have a sanative influence over our bodily organization, it is also probable that just colouring and lovely combinations of lines may be necessary to the complete well-being of our systems apart from any conscious delight in them. A savage may indulge in discordant chuckles and shrieks and gutturals, and think that they please the gods, but it does not follow that his frame would not be favourably wrought upon by the vibrations of a grand church organ. One sees a person capable of choosing the worst style of wall-paper become suddenly afflicted by its ugliness under an attack of illness. And if an evil state of blood and lymph usually goes along with an evil state of mind, who shall say that the ugliness of our streets, the falsity of our ornamentation, the vulgarity of our upholstery, have not something to do with those bad tempers which breed false conclusions?

On several grounds it is possible to make a more speedy and extensive application of artistic reform to our interior decoration than to our external architecture. One of these grounds is that most of our ugly buildings must stand; we cannot afford to pull them down. But every year we are decorating interiors afresh, and people of modest means may benefit by the introduction of beautiful designs into stucco ornaments, paper-hangings,

THE GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT

draperies, and carpets. Fine taste in the decoration of interiors is a benefit that spreads from the palace to the clerk's house with one parlor.

All honour, then, to the architect who has zealously vindicated the claim of internal ornamentation to be a part of the architect's function, and has laboured to rescue that form of art which is most closely connected with the sanctities and pleasures of our hearts from the hands of uncultured tradesmen. All the nation ought at present to know that this effort is peculiarly associated with the name of Mr. Owen Jones; and those who are most disposed to dispute with the architect about his colouring must at least recognize the high artistic principle which has directed his attention to coloured ornamentation as a proper branch of architecture. One monument of his effort in this way is his "Grammar of Ornament," of which a new and cheaper edition has just been issued. The one point in which it differs from the original and more expensive edition, namely, the reduction in the size of the pages (the amount of matter and number of plates are unaltered), is really an advantage; it is now a very manageable folio, and when the reader is in a lounging mood may be held easily on the knees. It is a magnificent book; and those who know no more of it than the title should be told that they will find in it a pictorial history of ornamental design, from its rudimentary condition, as seen in the productions of savage tribes, through all the other great types of art, — the Egyptian, Assyrian, Ancient Persian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arabian, Moresque, Mohammedan-Persian, Indian, Celtic, Mediæval, Renaissance, Eliza-

THE GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT

bethan, and Italian. The letter-press consists, first, of an introductory statement of fundamental principles of ornamentation, — principles, says the author, which will be found to have been obeyed more or less instinctively by all nations in proportion as their art has been a genuine product of the national genius; and, secondly, of brief historical essays, some of them contributed by other eminent artists, presenting a commentary on each characteristic series of illustrations, with the useful appendage of bibliographical lists.

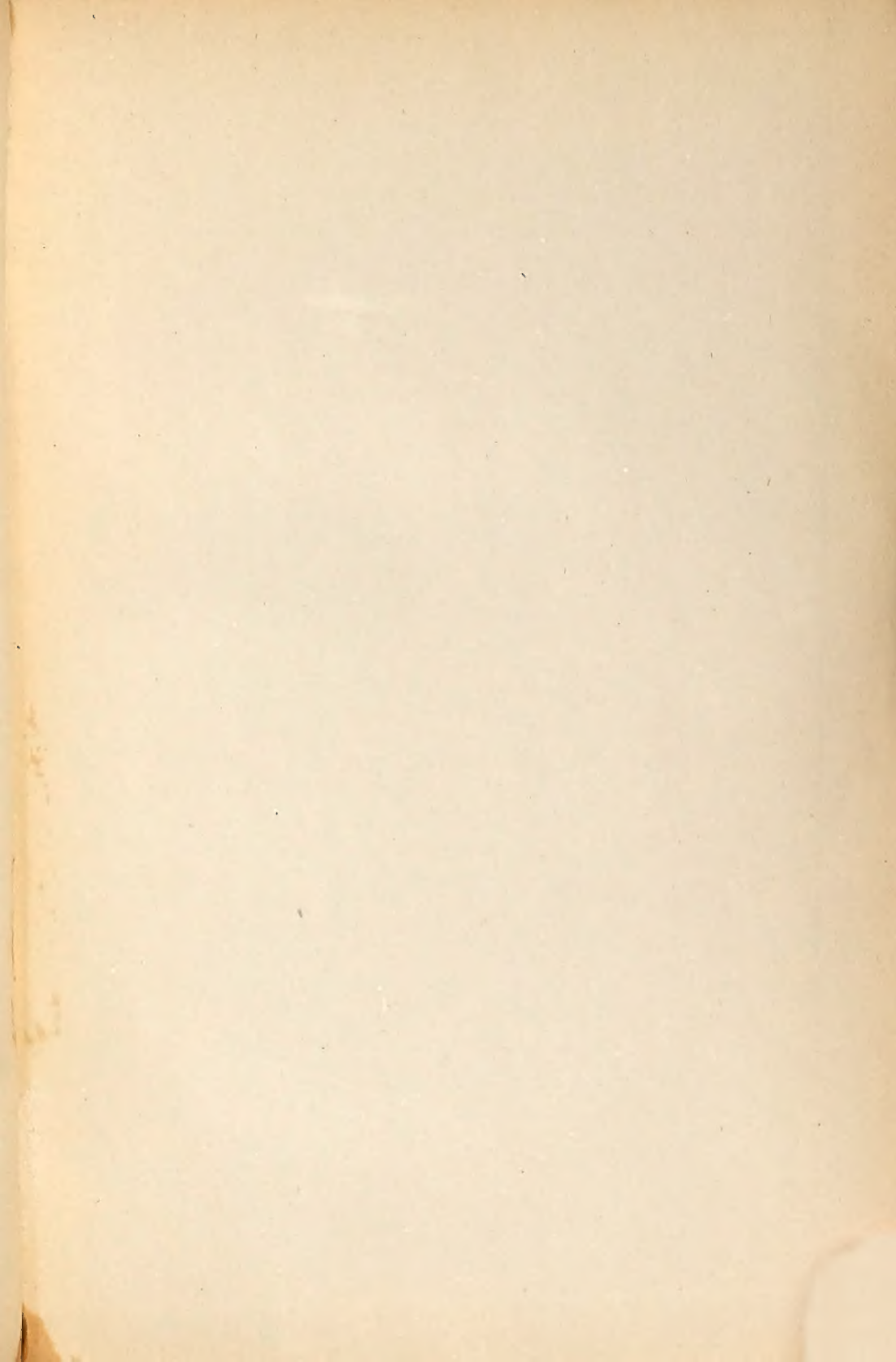
The title "Grammar of Ornament" is so far appropriate that it indicates what Mr. Owen Jones is most anxious to be understood concerning the object of his work, namely, that it is intended to illustrate historically the application of principles, and not to present a collection of models for mere copyists. The plates correspond to examples in syntax, not to be repeated parrot-like, but to be studied as embodiments of syntactical principles.

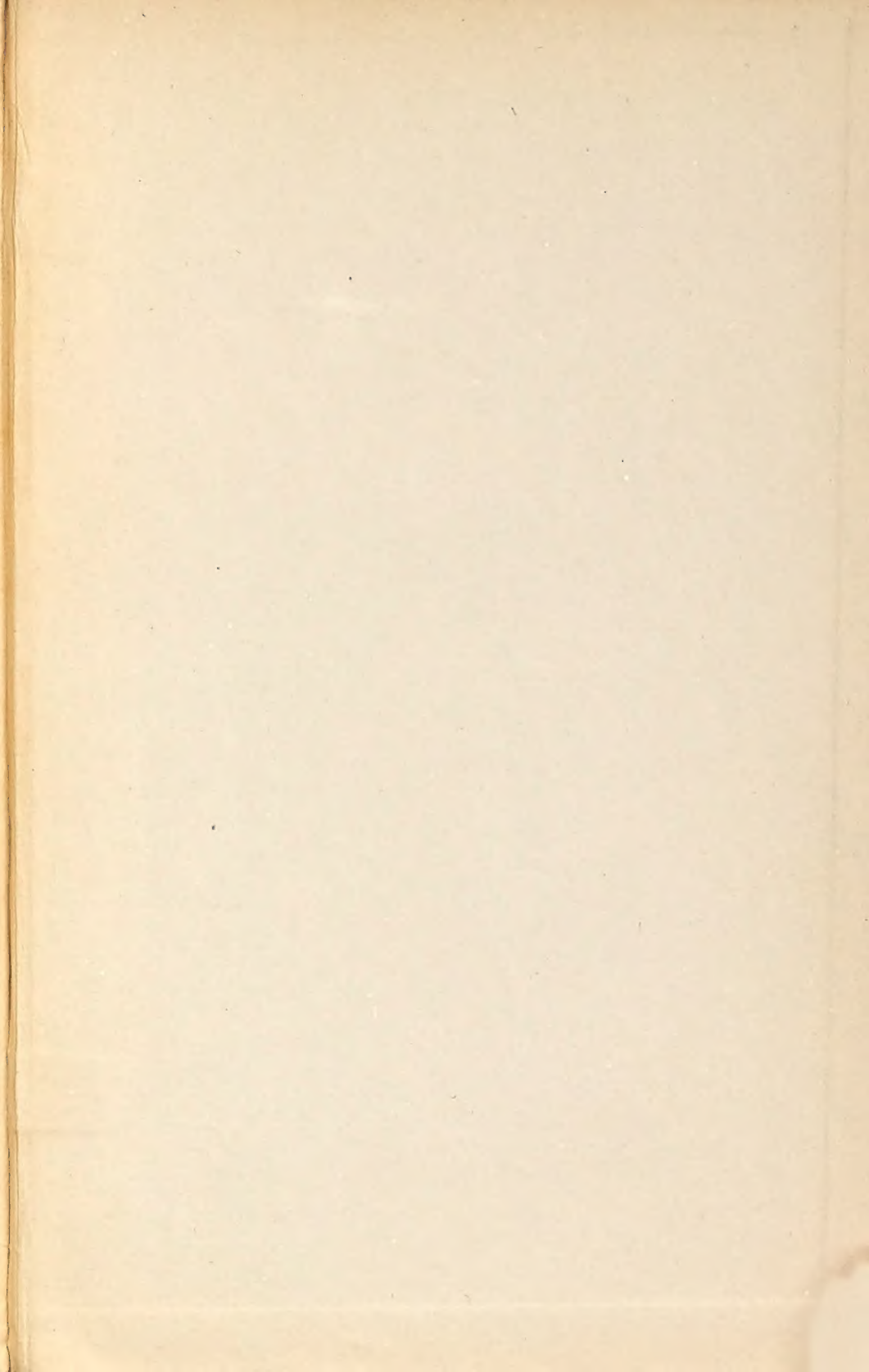
There is a logic of form which cannot be departed from in ornamental design without a corresponding remoteness from perfection; unmeaning, irrelevant words, or clauses that tend nowhither. And as a suggestion towards the origination of fresh ornamental design, the work concludes with some beautiful drawings of leaves and flowers from nature, that the student, tracing in them the simple laws of form which underlie an immense variety in beauty, may the better discern the method by which the same laws were applied in the finest decorative work of the past, and may have all the clearer prospect of the unexhausted possibilities of fresh-

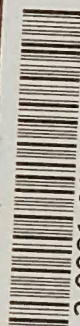
THE GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT

ness which lie before him, if, refraining from mere imitation, he will seek only such likeness to existing forms of ornamental art as arises from following like principles of combination.

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS
U . S . A







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